

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	02/02/2012
<b>Inspector</b>	Elizabeth Tanner
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	23/11/2011
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service that exceeds minimum requirements

**Adequate:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

This home provides well-organised and individualised care for young people in a friendly and comfortable environment. Young people describe the home as 'homely' and the staff as 'cool'. Young people's views are central to the planning and provision of good quality care. This leads to positive outcomes in terms of educational achievement and successful transition to independence. Young people make progress and enjoy positive relationships with staff.

This inspection found that the provider has not supplied Ofsted with information about the quality of care. In addition, newly appointed staff have not had restraint training. Also, staff recruitment records do not show that the provider has made telephone enquires about all people applying to work at the home.

## Areas for improvement

### Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
34 (2001)	supply to the HMCI a report in respect of any monitoring and improving of the quality of care provided in the children's home. (Regulation 34 (2))	29/02/2012

## Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure all staff are trained in the use of physical restraint techniques. This is in particular regard to newly appointed staff (NMS 3.15)
- ensure that records show that telephone enquires are made as well as obtaining written references when recruiting staff. (NMS 16.1)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress in this service. Young people comment that the home is 'good', while a social worker says staff did 'an excellent job in developing an open and trusting relationship' with a young person. This supportive environment enables young people to develop emotional resilience and trust. Careful care planning enables young people to undertake work about their background. This leads to an understanding of their personal history. In turn, this helps them to develop a sense of belonging.

Young people make good progress in relation to education compared to their starting point upon admission. Young people with a history of low school attendance become more engaged through consultation and flexible approaches to learning arrangements. Young people benefit from ongoing support to remain focused on their education even after moving to supported living.

Young people's mental and physical health is promoted within the home. Young people are encouraged to take suitable responsibility for their health and manage their medication as appropriate. As a direct result young people develop an increased maturity and develop a sense of personal responsibility.

Staff demonstrate an understanding about the importance of contact for young people. They actively support this when it is safe and appropriate. This means young people feel that they are valued and their individual circumstances supported. Contact is seen as important by staff and young people benefit by developing and maintaining positive relationships with their families and significant others. One social work manager commented that the staff managed contact very well.

Young people are effectively supported to prepare for independence by the implementation of care plans. This gives them increasing responsibilities to enable the development of skills and knowledge. Young people can take responsibility for budgeting, medication, cooking and laundry as appropriate. Because of the support and responsibility given, young people are prepared well for independence. One

young person said 'they tried to help me become more independent, when I would listen'.

## Quality of care

The quality of the care is **good**.

Young people are looked after by an enthusiastic, diverse and committed staff group. One young person said they feel 'the staff really love me'. This commitment ensures young people are aware that staff are consistently concerned about their well-being and in turn young people feel valued. Care plans are individual to each young person and demonstrate respect for differing needs. Young people can access their case files and are positively encouraged to contribute to placement planning. Staff plan well and are flexible about the timing of the one to one support they provide with young people. This assists young people to understand their individual situation. An example of direct work is health promotion work such as sex and relationship awareness and life story work. This helps young people to progress and develop.

Young people are actively involved in the decision making in the home. They are encouraged to participate in young people's meetings and their ideas are acted upon. For example, when security lighting was requested by young people this request was agreed. This makes sure young people have a voice. Within key work sessions and young people's meetings, diversity and equality are discussed and respect for difference encouraged. Young people's individual needs are met within the home allowing them to exercise personal choice about diet and religious or cultural practice. For example young people are supported to attend places of worship of their choice and also supported if they decide they no longer wish to practice.

The home has effective links with health resources and encourages young people to engage with a wide range of health professionals. Young people are supported as appropriate to register with a medical practitioner or dentist of their choice as far as is practicable. This encourages young people to take appropriate levels of responsibility for their own health care.

Education is valued within this home, thus promoting an environment of continued learning. Young people benefit from a specialised education worker and the expertise this offers encourages young people to engage with the education process. Individual learning preferences of young people are built upon and there is an enthusiastic commitment from staff to find educational resources that are appropriate for each young person. Through this young people are more likely to engage and achieve in learning. One social worker said the staff worked very hard with a young person to support a young person's education saying 'They attended meetings and were proactive'.

The home is well maintained and young people are able to influence the decoration of their bedrooms. For example, they are able to choose the decoration for a feature wall in their bedrooms. There is appropriate privacy and space as well as comfortable

communal areas.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Young people feel safe at this home and there are robust procedures in place to ensure young people stay safe. When young people go missing the staff are persistent in maintaining contact with young people and advising of potential risks. Staff are proactive when a safeguarding concern arises. For example, calling meetings and reviewing care plans and discussing risk management with social workers. Links have been made with the local police who are invited to regular meetings at the home. As a result young people, have the opportunity to discuss personal safety and staying safe in the community in a supportive environment. This helps to keep them safe.

Young people are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding issues and act decisively to protect children and report safeguarding concerns. Staff and young people have a range of information readily available to guide decisions and inform actions. This helps to protect young people further.

Staff promote positive behaviour including the use of incentives and positive reinforcement. Restraint is rarely used in this home. Newer members of staff are not yet trained in restraint. The impact of this on young people is minimised by careful management of the staff rota and the care plans of the young people in placement. The young person's guide gives clear information about bullying and how it can be prevented. Staff are alert to the potential for bullying and it is openly discussed in various meetings. Young people are protected because they are made aware that bullying is not acceptable and will be challenged.

Staff files are well maintained and recruitment processes are strong. Not all files indicated that telephone contact with referees has been made as is required by the Regulations. This means it is not always possible to be confident that the young people are as effectively safeguarded in the recruitment process as they could be.

The home environment is physically safe with appropriate risk assessments in place to ensure young people are protected from accident or injury.

## **Leadership and management**

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The home is currently managed by an acting manager who has submitted an application to Ofsted for the position of Registered Manager. All policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and discussed with staff. This ensures that young people receive consistent care. The manager keeps up to date with new legislation and practice developments to improve the

quality of the service provided. There is clear commitment to identifying good practice, shortfalls and further areas for development. This is seen in the team meeting and supervision records of staff who are asked to look at different National Minimum Standards and consider how they can improve the quality of care offered in the home. The service has a development plan to ensure all areas of the home continue to develop and improve.

The manager monitors the quality of care through reports prepared by independent or senior managers as well as her own close oversight of care arrangements. The manager has not supplied Ofsted with her reports about the monitoring of the quality of care provided at the home. The staff team for this service is well balanced. They come from a variety of backgrounds and with a range of experiences. They are enthusiastic and staff are supported with consistent and regular supervision. Staff confirm they receive core training to ensure professional development.

The young person's guide is detailed and gives information about home routines and rules as well as information about the complaints procedure and relevant telephone numbers such as for Ofsted, Child line and other support agencies. The guide ensures young people know they are central to the running of the home. The guide also addresses a number of issues such as racism, bullying and sexual orientation.

## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.