

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	17/05/2012
<b>Inspector</b>	David Martin
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	03/11/2011
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This is a privately owned children's home. The home is currently registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight children and young people of either gender between the ages of eight years and 17 years. The home aims to support children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

### 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**.

Prior to admission to this setting, many young people have poor experiences of care and have longstanding difficulties in engaging with their education, keeping themselves safe and forming constructive relationships with others. From this low starting point they make good progress in establishing a positive outlook. They benefit from being able to access in-house education and begin to develop a sense of the way in which earlier experiences have impacted on their behaviour. The home ensures they access the health care they need. Significant progress has been made in supporting young people to reduce risk taking and anti-social behaviour. The home is well managed and the manager has made an application to be registered. The staff team are well led and have good access to on-going training and supervision. There is an annual development plan in place which has set clear targets for sustained improvement. All previous requirements and recommendations have been implemented and none are made as a result of this inspection.

### Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people living at this setting have experienced a range of traumatic and damaging events in their lives prior to admission and have difficulty in expressing their emotions in a positive way. Historically, they have had poor school attendance, have been missing from home frequently, have had high levels of offending and anti-social behaviour and have interacted with staff in violent and aggressive ways.

From this low starting point, young people quickly develop positive relationships with staff and begin to engage in the process of change. This enables them to begin to form a positive self-view and to develop emotional resilience. They benefit from therapeutic work and keyworker sessions which enable them to understand their personal histories and the way in which events have impacted on the way they interact. Parents appreciate the work undertaken by the home and one said that they are, 'very satisfied with what the home has managed to achieve in a short space of time'.

Young people enjoy good health. They have access to both primary and specialist health care provision. Young people understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and are actively engaged in exercise. They eat well and enjoy well-balanced meals. None of the young people have issues relating to the misuse of alcohol or illegal substances. They are made aware of the dangers of smoking tobacco and have been provided with information about smoking cessation. This approach contributes to young people's overall health and well-being.

Young people are engaging in their education and are beginning to understand its value. They have access to an in-house tutor and learning suite which has a wide range of educational materials. The tutor employs innovative techniques to encourage young people to complete school work. There is a concentration on remedial exercises to improve numeracy and literacy. This provides young people with a good foundation to enable them to move on to more challenging lessons.

Young people have good opportunities to share their views and participate in day-to-day decision making in the home. On an individual basis they participate in keyworker sessions which are aimed at helping them to explore personal issues with staff. They attend fortnightly house meetings which enable them to contribute their opinions on a range of topics including the menus, activities and keeping themselves safe.

Each young person has a contact plan which is agreed with the placing authority. Contact is facilitated by the staff and their efforts to ensure it takes place smoothly are welcomed by parents.

### **Quality of care**

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

In the course of the last 12 months the staff have made considerable progress in developing positive relationships with young people. Individual behaviour management plans have been implemented. They focus on effective strategies for positive intervention to manage challenging or anti-social behaviour. As a result young people engage well with staff and interact with them in a good humoured and constructive way. This approach has brought about a significant reduction in confrontational behaviour.

As noted above, young people regularly participate in house meetings and can have

their say on the way in which the home is run. As and when young people's suggestions cannot be acted upon, the staff offer clear and open reasons for this. This helps young people understand that sometimes there have to be limits on what is and is not possible.

There is a clear complaints procedure which is readily available to young people. No complaints have been made since the last inspection.

Since taking up post at the beginning of the year the manager has introduced new individual placement plans which are completed with the young people. This ensures that young people are fully aware of the way in which the home intends to offer them highly personalised support and guidance. The plans are completed to a high standard and are reviewed regularly with young people to ensure that they continue to be relevant and focussed on the issues that matter.

In recent months the home has undergone extensive refurbishment. This has created a pleasant, warm and welcoming environment which is free from hazards and is well maintained. The home is located in a busy part of town and is close to leisure and recreational facilities which the young people enjoy using. Staff encourage young people to participate in a range of interesting and purposeful activities. This contributes to their sense of well-being.

Many of the young people have poor experiences of schooling prior to admission. However, the location of the learning suite within the grounds is being used effectively to re-engage them with their education. The approach adopted by the home is successfully tackling the barriers to education and is promoting the value of school attendance and attainment.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people say that they feel safe living in the home. The home places an appropriate level of prominence on safeguarding young people and protecting them from harm. Issues such as bullying are addressed proactively on an individual and collective basis.

The home has been particularly effective in reducing both the frequency and duration of incidents involving young people going missing. The risks are managed on an individual basis and there is clear evaluation of each incident which addresses antecedents and identifies triggers. There is a full debrief with the young person involved when they return home. As and when incidents occur, the staff make strenuous efforts to ensure that the young person is as safe as possible when they are absent. They maintain telephone contact with young people and follow protocols from both host and placing authority.

During the course of the last 12 months the home has made considerable progress in promoting positive behaviour. There is a high expectation that staff engage positively

with young people and intervene at an early stage to avert anti-social, negative or offending behaviour. They have been able to implement behaviour management plans in a way that minimises the need for physical intervention and incidents of restraint rarely occur. The frequency that the police have been called to the home has fallen dramatically.

There is robust vetting of prospective staff and on-going checks are carried out as required. This helps to protect young people from harm and ensures that the adults working in the home are suitable to work with young people. The home has established its own group of sessional staff which has eliminated the need to use agency workers. The numbers of child protection incidents is low but as and when they arise they are referred to all appropriate authorities fully and promptly.

### **Leadership and management**

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

The home has in place a permanently employed full time manager. An application for registration has been submitted and is currently being processed. The manager has been very effective in overseeing improvements in working practices in the home. This has had a significant positive impact on outcomes for young people and has actively engaged them in the support and guidance they receive.

The manager has effectively addressed all requirements and recommendations made as a result of the last inspection. In addition, a well-structured development plan for the home has been implemented which focuses on the strengths and areas for improvement. It identifies target dates for further improvement, delegates responsibility and consolidates progress made to date. The Statement of Purpose has been reviewed and shared with staff. These measures ensure collective ownership of the way in which the home is run.

The home has a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced permanent staff. They have good access to external training and receive high quality supervision. This enables them to reflect on their practice and to set targets for their own personal development.

Activity within the home is reviewed through Regulation 33 visits and monthly evaluation by the manager consistent with the requirements of Regulation 34. Both processes continue to make a contribution to the way in which the home is run and identify areas for improvement and development.

The premises are safe and well maintained. All records are held securely which ensures that information about young people is kept confidential.

## 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.