

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Shaun Common
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<b>Provision subtype</b>	Secure Unit

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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict young people's liberty. As well as the living accommodation, there are facilities for administration, education and recreation available on the site.

The children's home provides two separate units that can accommodate up to 12 young people, both male and female, who are aged between 10 and 17 years. Admission of a young person under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service of high quality 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 **adequate**.

Outstanding quality of care is provided, which has led to very positive outcomes for all young people. Staff have excellent relationships with young people and provide them with stability and very good support. Clear and detailed care plans set out young people's individual and diverse needs. The plans are monitored and fully implemented by staff.

A range of high quality services ensure that young people's holistic needs are assessed and met. Young people are effectively prepared for their transition back into the community.

Young people are kept safe by a staff team that fully understands and implements the home's safeguarding procedures. Managers closely scrutinise safeguarding matters to ensure best practice. There is independent monitoring and oversight of the home's practices relating to child protection and physical restraint by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). This ensures transparency and helps to keep young people safe.

Staff are experienced, qualified and well trained to care effectively for young people.

However, staff are not all well supported through regular formal supervision. Some aspects of the provision have not been monitored as well as they could be which has led to some gaps in records and policy not being identified.

Young people have regular opportunities to contribute their views about their care and the running of the home. They are fully included and involved in important decisions that affect their lives. They have access to a range of health services and they make very positive progress in education, which improves their life chances.

Areas for improvement include: providing staff with regular formal supervision; that abscond records are robust; sanction and separation records include young people's views; search policies are robust and have been agreed with the LSCB; search records reflect the policy; and that the Registered Manager robustly monitors abscond and sanction records.

## 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
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate supervision (Regulation 27(4)(a))	31/12/2012
34 (2001)	maintain the system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6; specifically ensure that items 11 and 12 are robustly monitored and any areas for improvement are identified and acted upon. (Regulation 34(1))	30/09/2012

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that where sanctions are used, young people have the opportunity to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- ensure written records kept by the home of when a child absconds, detail the action taken by staff; specifically record young people's views, that someone independent of the home has seen the young person within 72 hours of their return and all action taken in the light of the reasons the young person went missing; recording should reflect the detail set out in the statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care 2009 (NMS 5.10)
- monitor all records kept by the home; specifically the personal search records to

ensure they reflect the detail set out in the policy, including the level and type of search undertaken and the rationale in consideration of any risk assessment (NMS 21.2)

- provide a clear and appropriate policy, agreed with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, which effectively safeguards children from harm; specifically a policy that provides for regular searching of communal areas including frequency, and a policy that provides for personal searches of young people that includes the types of searches associated to the prevailing risk (NMS 23.3)
- provide young people with the opportunity to read and add a permanent comment to the record of their separation. (NMS 23.12)

## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are very well supported and quickly develop positive attachments with staff. This assists them to settle quickly into the home and to make excellent progress. Staff ensure that young people understand their history and why they are being cared for in a secure children's home. The work they undertake with young people helps them develop self-confidence and self-esteem and this contributes to excellent outcomes.

The health services provided and available, along with the encouragement and support from staff to attend any appointments, ensure that young people's health improves greatly. Young people make significant progress from admission, and continued progress ensures positive health outcomes. Young people are educated about sexual health and assisted to understand the risks and dangers from substance misuse and smoking. They therefore develop the knowledge to make informed choices that promote a healthy lifestyle and help keep them safe.

Attendance at the on-site education facility is excellent. Young people speak highly of the education they receive, and they are supported to make progress and achieve to the best of their ability. Young people make excellent progress in their education, which supports their future life chances and opportunities.

Staff ensure that young people are able to keep in touch with their families, friends and others important to them. This ensures that young people can maintain relationships that have a positive impact upon their lives and which will support them on their return to the community. Where contact is not possible staff explain the reasons to young people.

Planning for young people's return to the community starts at the point of admission. Staff ensure that there are clear plans in place for young people, and where necessary, remind local authorities of their responsibilities. Young people engage in a range of activities, supported and guided by staff, that enables them to develop skills for adulthood. This includes budgeting, cooking, self-care skills, washing and cleaning. There are robust and risk-assessed mobility programmes agreed with

placing authorities. These programmes enable young people, when they are prepared and ready, to undertake visits into the local community. This supports them well for the transition back into the community.

## Quality of care

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

There are excellent relationships between staff and young people. Staff are good role models and young people speak very positively about the support and care they receive. Staff have high aspirations for young people and support them to settle into the unit routines and to adjust to life in a secure facility. They assist young people with any homework and there is effective communication between education and care staff. This ensures that young people receive the highest quality of care that assists them to achieve their potential.

There are high quality, detailed care plans for each young person that set out their assessed needs and how these will be met. This includes religion and culture. Managers work closely with placing authorities to ensure that plans are up to date and reflect young people's individual needs. Young people are fully aware of their plans and are involved in all reviews, meetings and decisions regarding their care. Young people make excellent progress in the targets set for them during their stay at the home, particularly given the short duration of most of the placements.

There are a number of ways that young people can have a say about life at the home. They have very regular individual time with their key worker, young people's meetings and other meetings with relevant staff and managers to share their views and opinions. Young people's views and wishes are fully considered and taken seriously. They have an impact upon the running of the home. For example, the cook regularly meets with young people to ascertain their views regarding the quality, quantity and variety of food as well as likes and dislikes. Menus are changed as a result of young people's input.

Young people know and understand how to make a complaint should they need to. There are a number of ways they can raise concerns. For example, young people can speak to managers who are readily available, speak to an advocate or complete a form that goes to an external complaints department. Young people have free access to suitable information that informs them of the process and procedure. Young people are confident staff will resolve their concerns and this is reflected in that there has only been one formal complaint since the last inspection. This complaint was addressed quickly and resolved to the young person's satisfaction. This reflects a care provision where young people's views, feelings and concerns are listened to by staff who make every effort to respond to the satisfaction of the young person.

There are a range of activities for young people to engage in and enjoy. Young people can choose activities, and staff are skilled in motivating young people to try different things that are stimulating and fun. Some of the activities on offer include drama club, arts and crafts, beauty sessions, music club and cooking.

All areas of the home are very well decorated, furnished and secure. Young people are able to personalise their rooms, and their art work is displayed on the walls of living areas. The unit provides an environment that is conducive to the positive care of young people.

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

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

Young people stated they have no worries or concerns and feel safe. They stated that there is hardly any bullying, and incidents that do happen are of a minor nature. Young people stated that staff challenge bullying immediately.

There are clear and thorough risk assessments and strategies in place that determine how staff will keep young people safe. These assessments include young people's vulnerability and show clearly the action to be taken to ensure young people are safeguarded and any risks minimised.

There is a child protection procedure in place, which is known and understood by all staff. Staff's knowledge is enhanced by regular child protection training. This helps them to keep young people safe. There have been no child protection concerns since the last inspection and there are strong links with the LSCB. The links with the LSCB ensure there is oversight and scrutiny of practice, and development of best practice that supports managers and staff to help them to keep young people safe. Managers keep in touch with the LADO who has oversight of all safeguarding matters at the home. This oversight ensures there is transparency and that best practice is delivered in safeguarding young people.

There have been two incidents where young people have absconded since the last inspection. Both incidents involved young people who were on planned visits as part of their transition back into community. An appropriate procedure and protocol is in place that was followed by staff, and young people returned quickly to the home. However, although all relevant authorities were informed and a number of actions were taken which assisted to keep young people safe, records relating to the incidents are not robust. They do not evidence best practice. For example, they do not show that young people were seen by someone independent of the home on their return to assess their welfare. Some aspects of recording did not show young people's views about why they went missing. They also did not show all the action taken to prevent a re-occurrence, such as those set out in statutory government guidance.

Young people are encouraged to develop socially acceptable behaviour. The incentive scheme is understood by young people, who feel the rewards offered help them to improve their behaviour. Sanctions used are appropriate to the misdemeanour. They are monitored closely by managers for patterns and effectiveness to ensure there is a positive impact for young people. The effectiveness of the measure is not always accurately recorded by staff. However, managers have

identified this shortfall and continue to address the issue with the staff team to achieve improvement. Young people do not have the opportunity to have their comments recorded about sanctions imposed to assist them to develop understanding and responsibility.

Physical intervention is used infrequently and appropriately. Staff are trained and skilled in managing any incidents in a way that helps to keep young people safe. They use de-escalation techniques to diffuse incidents and to minimise the need to use physical intervention. All incidents are fully and robustly recorded. Managers monitor the use of physical intervention by randomly reviewing incidents via closed circuit television and scrutinising records. This ensures practice is of a high standard to safeguard young people.

Single separation is appropriately used and is clearly recorded. Staff ensure young people are safe during periods where they are locked in their rooms through close monitoring. Records reflect the monitoring that takes place. They are checked by managers for accuracy and to ensure high standards of care and safety are provided to young people.

Searches take place of young people and areas of the home to ensure the environment is safe. Searches help to ensure that any items that could harm young people are found and removed. However, the policy and records lack detail and clarity about the kinds of searches taking place and how searching will promote the dignity of young people. For example, the records do not indicate the type of search taking place, such as using an electronic wand or a 'pat down'. The policy does not state the different types of searches that staff may undertake in consideration of any risk the young person presents to themselves, and any background information. Young people had no concerns about practices at the home so the impact of this matter is minimal.

Recruitment processes are robust. Two new staff have been employed since the last inspection. All relevant and required information is in place to demonstrate that the right people are employed to work with vulnerable children.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home's Statement of Purpose provides good information for parents and placing authorities about the range of services provided. The document is kept up to date and reviewed regularly. Young people are provided with good information in a children's guide that tells them what the home is like and what to expect. Information about the home is available in different formats. For example, it can be provided in different languages for those whose first language is not English.

There is an appropriate number of staff on duty at all times to meet the needs of young people and to provide safe care. All staff are well trained and qualified. New staff undertake a good induction programme and are enrolled on relevant courses to



attain a suitable qualification relevant to their role. Staff fully understand young people's needs and are knowledgeable of the procedures and processes required to keep young people safe. However, they do not receive sufficient formal supervision from their line manager, in order that they are well supported to continue to deliver high quality care to young people. Newly appointed staff are not sufficiently supported in line with the policy. The policy sets out that they should receive more frequent formal supervision than experienced or well-established staff.

There is good external monitoring of the home. Regular visits take place by someone independent of the home and this process helps managers to improve the quality of care provided to young people. A report is produced about each visit, which reflects the home's strengths and areas for improvement. These are acted upon to benefit young people. Reports are sent to Ofsted in a timely manner.

Internal monitoring of the home is generally good. However, some aspects of the provision have not been monitored effectively. The frequency of formal supervision provided to staff is not to the required standard. Young people have not been afforded the opportunity to have their comments recorded about sanctions imposed and incidents where they have been in single separation. Records relating to young people absconding are not thorough. There is good monitoring of all other aspects of the provision, which has led to excellent quality of care and outcomes for young people. Reports of monitoring reflect the strengths of the service and most areas for improvement, which will benefit young people.

There is a detailed development plan for the home. This sets out what managers and staff intend to achieve to improve service delivery to young people and to improve outcomes. There is regular consultation with parents, young people and placing authorities about the standard of service provided and areas that can be further improved. The information gathered from such consultation is used in plans to inform future development and improvement.

## 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.