

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	31/10/2013
<b>Inspector</b>	Monica Hargreaves
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	08/01/2013
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This children's home is run by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to seven young people who have experienced emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

### 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 **good**.

Young people are well cared for by a consistent and competent team of staff who have a very good understanding of their needs. The detailed placement plans and risk assessments that staff put in place promote consistency and ensure that young people receive care that is individualised to meet their specific needs. This helps young people to achieve positive outcomes.

Young people report that they feel safe in the home. This is confirmed by professionals and relatives. Care staff have a very good knowledge of safeguarding issues and understand the vulnerabilities of the young people they look after. They work effectively with staff from other agencies to ensure that young people are protected. Professionals report that young people's behaviour improves over time as a result of the way they are cared for.

Young people's sense of self-esteem and confidence increases; because they feel valued by staff. They achieve at school and college because they are encouraged and supported to attend regularly and to engage with their education. Their health needs are met and they are supported to develop the skills they will need for independence.

The home is well managed. The manager provides effective leadership to staff and ensures that there is good management oversight of their work and of the progress that young people make. The manager demonstrates a clear commitment to the continuous improvement of the service that is given to young people.

One requirement and one recommendation have been made as a result of this inspection. These relate to the manager's reports of monthly monitoring and an aspect of young people's behaviour.

## 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)	ensure that the system that is in place for monitoring the quality of care in the home provides for consultation with children, their parents and placing authorities (Regulation 34 (3))	31/12/2013

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that young people take responsibility for their own behaviour, in particular in relation to anti-social behaviour outside the home. (NMS 3.6)

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress, overall, from their starting point on admission to the home. They are confident about their relationships with staff. They say that staff listen to them and are concerned about their welfare. This helps them to feel valued, supports their sense of self-worth and enables them to grow in confidence.

Young people enjoy good health. They understand about health issues and have a healthy lifestyle. Young people do not use drugs. This has a positive impact on their health. The majority of young people do not smoke. Those young people who do are encouraged to stop. This also contributes to supporting their good health. Young people's general and additional health needs are monitored through attendance at regular appointments with primary health care teams as well as more specialist services. Young people have medicines when they need them to support their health. Procedures for managing medication are robust and protect young people.

Young people attend their education provision regularly and engage well.

Consequently, they make steady progress overall and work to gain recognised qualifications. This improves their chances in later life. Young people have aspirations and plans for their future education and employment.

Young people benefit emotionally from maintaining contact with their families. These links support their sense of identity and contribute to ensuring that they have a clear understanding of their history.

Most young people take part in range of activities that benefit their general development and enable them to make friendships in their community. For example, they attend local youth clubs and cadet groups, play rugby and go swimming. They also benefit from holidays that are organised by staff.

Young people develop life skills over time at a pace that is appropriate to their individual needs. For example, they learn practical skills such as budgeting and cooking. They also develop social skills through the work they do with staff and the relationships they develop in the home. This also helps to prepare them for future independence.

## **Quality of care**

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

Young people benefit from being well cared for a team of staff who have a very good understanding of their needs. Staff develop detailed individualised placement plans with young people, ensuring that care is tailored to their specific needs. Staff are competent and work well together, providing consistent care to young people. This supports young people's progress and enables them to achieve good outcomes over time.

Professionals and relatives confirm that they believe young people are well cared for and make positive comments about the quality of care. For example, one professional said, 'It's a really good environment for young people' and another reported that staff work hard with young people, 'they do not give up on them'. One relative commented '(name) likes the staff which puts my mind at ease.'

Staff are very positive about the value of education. They work hard to ensure that young people have an appropriate education placement. They ensure that there are good routines in the home to support young people's regular attendance. They attend all school meetings and events so that young people understand that they are taking an active interest in their education and want them to do well. The support staff give young people helps them to attend their education provision regularly and to achieve.

Yong people benefit from the work that staff do which helps them to learn to manage conflict and difficulties in their lives. Staff offer young people incentives which encourage them to behave well and provide clear and firm boundaries to support them. Behaviour management plans identify how staff work with individual

young people to promote positive behaviour and minimise the likelihood that their behaviour will become challenging. These plans ensure that there is a consistent approach from staff. As a result of the way they are cared for, young people settle and their behaviour in the home improves over time.

Young people are regularly consulted about their own care and the running of the home. This is achieved through key work sessions, involvement in care planning and reviewing and attendance at young people's house meetings. These arrangements enable young people to make their views known and to influence what happens in the home.

Staff work very closely with families and professionals from other agencies, such as education, youth offending teams and health agencies. This partnership working ensures that young people have access to any additional service they may need in order to support their progress.

Young people benefit from living in a safe, well maintained, homely environment. The home is suitably located in a residential area. Transport links are good, enabling young people to have easy access to local facilities. Young people report that they like their home. They personalise their rooms and help to keep the home in good order. This promotes a sense of ownership.

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

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

Young people are cared for safely. They say that they feel safe in the home and that staff give them advice about safety outside the home. Relatives and professionals also report that young people are protected. One professional said 'Young people feel safe and well cared for here.' Staff are trained in safeguarding and safe care and they have a good knowledge of the authority's safeguarding procedure. Consequently, they understand how to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and know how to report these in order to keep young people safe.

In consultation with social workers and other professionals, staff develop detailed risk assessments for each young person. These address all aspects of their care and welfare ensuring that potential risks are identified and minimised or eliminated in order to protect young people. Plans are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain up to date and continue to be effective.

Young people say that they are able to talk to staff and would let them know if they had a problem. They also say that they know how to make a formal complaint. Complaints are fully investigated by the manager in line with the authority's complaints procedure. Young people confirm that they know how to contact the independent advocacy service if they are not happy with the outcome of these investigations. Young people understand that bullying is not tolerated in the home. They are confident that any issues that do arise between individual young people are dealt with promptly by staff.

Staff are trained in behaviour management techniques. This includes training in physical restraint. The home's policy is very clear and restraint is only ever used as a last resort when it is necessary to protect young people and staff. Consequently, there have been only three incidents that have resulted in a physical intervention since the last inspection. Professionals say that young people's behaviour improves over time and overall young people behave well in the home. However, some young people have recently become involved in anti-social behaviour outside the home. Staff are addressing this with the support of the police and youth offending team.

The home has a clear protocol for managing incidents of unauthorised absence that has been agreed with the local police. Although there are few instances when young people are absent from the home for more than a few hours. If they do not return at the agreed time, staff report their absence to the relevant agencies. Staff are proactive in arranging meetings with the police and social workers to discuss any concerns that arise for young people, for example, in relation to anti-social behaviour or a number of late returns to the home. This partnership working ensures that potential risks are made known to relevant agencies and plans put in place to protect young people.

Young people are protected by the authority's robust staff recruitment policies and practices. These ensure that all staff are vetted and assessed as suitable before they start work in the home.

The home itself is kept safe for young people, staff and visitors. This is achieved through a system of robust health and safety risk assessments and checks on the environment and equipment.

## **Leadership and management**

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

Young people benefit from living in a home that is managed effectively. The manager is qualified and very experienced. He provides good leadership to staff. The home's acting assistant manager is also qualified and experienced and ensures that the home continues to run smoothly in the absence of the manager.

There is good management oversight of the work of the home. Regular checks ensure that good standards of care are maintained and that the progress of young people is monitored. The manager confirmed that he has regular discussions with young people about their care in the home. However, there is no evidence in the reports that he provides under Regulation 34 of the consultation that is held with families or professionals or how this is used to inform developments in the home.

The home has a good track record of taking action on issues raised in inspections or through management monitoring in order to improve the quality of the service that is given to young people. There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection.

There is an established team of care staff who work well together. They provide continuity and consistency of care for young people; which in turn supports their progress. Staff are competent. They are either qualified or working to complete a qualification and they report that they have good training opportunities. Consequently, they are able to develop and maintain the knowledge and skills they require for their work with vulnerable young people. Staff report that they are well supported in their work. They have regular supervision and are able to seek informal guidance from managers outside these sessions.

The home's Statement of Purpose is clear and detailed, providing accurate information about how the home works and how young people are cared for. The young person's guide to the service gives young people good information about how they will be looked after and about their rights in care. Young people confirmed that they had been given a copy of the guide before they came to live in the home.

Young people's records are detailed and well maintained and contribute to their understanding of their history and their time in the home. Records are stored securely to protect young people's right to confidentiality. Young people are encouraged to read and contribute to their files. This ensures that they understand the information that is kept about them and that their views are incorporated into their documents.



## 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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.