

Inspection report for children's home

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| Unique reference number | SC437171 |
| Inspector | Wendy Anderson |
| Type of inspection | Full |
| Provision subtype | Children's home |

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|----------------------------------|---|
| Registered person | John-Edwards Care Homes Ltd |
| Registered person address | 2 Cricklade Court Cricklade Street SWINDON SN1 3EY |
| Responsible individual | Dawn Johnson |
| Registered manager | Tracey Ann Edwards |
| Date of last inspection | 02/01/2014 |

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|------------------------|------------|
| Inspection date | 29/07/2014 |
|------------------------|------------|

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|--|---------------|
| Previous inspection | good progress |
| Enforcement action since last inspection | none |

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|--|-------------|
| This inspection | |
| Overall effectiveness | good |
| Outcomes for children and young people | outstanding |
| Quality of care | outstanding |
| Keeping children and young people safe | outstanding |
| Leadership and management | good |

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Judgement outcome | good |
|-------------------|-------------|

Young people who access or live at the home are cared for to a high standard by an exceptionally dedicated, well trained and child centred staff team. This is particularly the case in the skill the staff have in addressing young people's very complex health care needs. Through consistency of care and the in depth knowledge the staff have of individual's needs, young people make excellent progress. Young people's development, wellbeing and safety are at the heart of the work of staff.

Staff are proactive in consulting with young people, parents and fellow professionals on the care they deliver. Consistency of care benefits all young people and leads to improved outcomes.

Young people, parents and fellow professionals are extremely positive about the highly individualised care that young people receive. The team is excellent at building and sustaining trusting and effective work relationships with young people, parents and fellow professionals.

The home provides a safe, secure and nurturing environment for young people to grow, develop and make exceptional progress. Staff provide an excellent range of activities which are not only fun but also develop young people's skill in a wide range of areas. This includes introducing them to new social experiences within the

home and the wider community.

Leaders and managers of the home have good monitoring systems which ensure young people receive a high standard of care and that required documentation is completed. The only shortfalls concern the supervision and probationary reporting on new staff, as this is not consistently happening at the frequency required and does not contain sufficient detail.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to care for five children with learning difficulties and associated disabilities. The home is run by a private company and can offer the flexibility of short breaks in addition to long-term placements.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 02/01/2014 | Interim | good progress |
| 01/08/2013 | Full | outstanding |
| 21/02/2013 | Interim | good progress |
| 15/10/2012 | Full | outstanding |

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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 staff receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. In particular ensure new staff receive supervision in line with the home's supervision policy and that records of new staff members' probationary meetings include information on any issues identified and actions to address these. (Regulation 27 (4)(a)) | 31/10/2014 |

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people benefit from receiving care from an experienced, well trained and child-centred staff team which has an in depth knowledge of their individual needs. Young people undergo a thorough assessment and introduction to the home which enables them to settle quickly.

Young people, parents and social workers report that young people benefit from coming to the home and love their time there. They have made new friends and developed new skills, including practical skills, as well as working on their individual needs.

Young people are supported by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. This includes accessing external support services and specialist services where required. Parents comment on young people's improved behaviours and sleep patterns.

Young people are supported to become involved in an extensive range of stimulating activities. They are able to choose what they want to do and put forward suggestions for new activities, which the staff will arrange for them. These are not only fun but also enhance young people's development.

Young people are enabled and supported by staff to have input to all decisions about their care. This is done using a variety of communication aids.

Education is well supported and promoted by the staff team. Young people have excellent attendance at school and make very good progress. The use of 'home to school' books promotes effective communication, sharing of information and consistency of approach.

Parents were extremely positive about the care provided. Some parents said: 'Buttons is a fantastic place. It takes a lot of trust for a parent to leave their child with people but we trust Buttons staff completely.' Others said: 'it's an excellent place and they look after my son really well. He especially enjoys the trips and activities.' A point raised by several parents was that respite at Buttons enables them to have a break and do more things with their other children. One parent said: 'Buttons is close to perfect.'

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people's care and wellbeing are central to all the work staff members undertake, and they have very high aspirations for the young people they care for. Parents and fellow professionals comment that young people accessing the service make excellent progress from their starting point at admission. This is due to the staff team's detailed understanding of the young people and their individual needs. This approach, coupled with extensive communication with families and other professionals, ensures outstanding consistency of care. Each young person has a comprehensive, highly-individualised, plan and package. These are frequently reviewed and amended so as to remain current. This process also highlights achievements and progress.

This is particularly evident in behaviour plans. These plans are sensitively written and take into account young people's preferences with regard to their personal care. Young people are treated with dignity and respect due to the consistent implementation of these plans. Staff see young people as individuals ahead of their disability and challenge effectively any barriers that prevent young people's full involvement in society. The whole team has a 'can do' attitude which enables and supports young people not only to increase their access to the community and new experiences but also to reach their full potential.

The home has an excellent pre-admission assessment process which comprehensively evaluates how each young person's needs will be met alongside the needs of the existing group of young people. This process is strictly adhered to so as to ensure standards of care are not compromised. The information gathered during this process means that staff are well prepared and the young person's needs are addressed from the outset.

Staff have outstanding relationships with young people, their parents and carers, and fellow professionals. They consult about all aspects of young people's care, and this is one of the key strengths of the service. This, linked with the exceptional skill the staff have at using a variety of communication systems, ensures consultation with young people is effective. Parents and fellow professionals compliment the service on their communication skills. Parents appreciate the feedback they get on their child. Some parents said this approach helped them to build up trust with the service when their child first started accessing it.

The staff are excellent at supporting young people with their education. Staff attend all education meetings and appointments. They work collaboratively with education providers so as to provide consistency of care, especially in the areas of communication and behaviour management. Recently they have supported young people to attend their school prom. The social workers of these young people praised the team for this, especially the support they provided to the family to enable them to attend as well.

The home has excellent systems in place to address the health and medical needs of young people. Some young people have very complex health care needs. This can be

an area of concern for some parents. However the high quality training and skills of the staff team quickly allay these. As well as training which is frequently refreshed, staff have their practice observed on a regular basis to ensure high standards are maintained. A contributing factor is the multi-disciplinary approach taken when formulating health plans, which involve medical professionals, specialist nurses and parents. The home keeps comprehensive records of medication received into the home, administered to the young people and returned home or disposed of. This provides a clear audit trail through which the medication administered to young people can be monitored.

The home ensures that specialist equipment is provided and is well maintained, and that staff are trained in its use, with regular updates. The home is also proactive in purchasing any new equipment that will benefit the young people.

Young people are able to access an excellent range of activities both within the home and in the local community. During the inspection young people were seen doing various activities and going out on trips. The young people also have a holiday away planned, which they are really looking forward to.

Accommodation at the home is of a very high standard. The home has a welcoming and friendly atmosphere. There is ample space both internally and externally for the young people, including those with wheelchairs or mobility issues. The home has a sensory room with a water bed which the young people love. All of the bedrooms are personalised and comfortably furnished. The external space includes the garden, which has sensory element, play equipment which all can access and a table tennis table.

The home has a clear complaints policy and procedure in place. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

The home has extremely positive relationships with other professionals. Fellow professionals compliment the staff team on their commitment to the young people and their drive to continually develop the service and maintain the highest standard of care. They also praise the staff for the progress the young people have made. This includes, in some cases, the support the staff have provided to young people in maintaining their relationship with their families.

Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

Young people thrive in a stable and safe environment. An excellent recruitment and vetting policy and procedure for appointing staff is robustly adhered to in practice. This ensures young people are protected from unsuitable people who may wish to harm them. Managers are very aware that the young people they care for are amongst the most vulnerable thus the criteria they have for staff selection are very stringent. All staff who carry out interviews have been trained in safer recruitment

practices.

The home also has a robust safeguarding policy and procedure, including whistle-blowing, that is adhered to in practice. Staff see safeguarding as the core of the work they undertake, particularly given the vulnerability of the young people they care for. This approach is supported by robust training for the staff in all areas of child protection and safer care practices. This training is frequently updated to reflect changes to legislation or developments in practice. The home has very effective working relationships with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The home's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding are shared with the LSCB to ensure they are in line with local protocols.

Staff interviewed demonstrate a clear understanding of safeguarding work in its widest remit as well as specifically relating to child protection. There have been no safeguarding referrals since the last inspection. The home's whistle-blowing policy contains a specific statement referring to raising issues about family members who work at the home. The managers felt this was needed to give staff clear guidance should a situation arise.

Behaviour management at the home is very good. The foundation of this is the in-depth knowledge the staff have of young people's individual vulnerabilities and behavioural triggers. Since the last inspection there have been no physical restraints. The home's focus on positive reinforcement and rewarding good behaviours successfully encourages young people to behave well. Where sanctions are used these are low level and well recorded. The home does work with young people's education providers, parents and the community nurse to develop individual behaviour strategies and approaches. This joint work provides consistency for young people and has proved to be very effective. This is evidenced by the reduction of negative behaviours. All sanctions and behaviour plans are robustly monitored by the manager so that trends and themes can be identified and addressed.

The home has robust health and safety policies and procedures, adhered to in practice. This ensures young people live in a safe environment that is free from risk wherever possible. There is a comprehensive risk assessment process, including regular review to ensure risk assessments reflect young people's current needs and risks. These are regularly monitored by the manager. There is evidence of monitoring being effective and gaps quickly addressed with the staff concerned.

Fire records within the home are comprehensive. There are regular fire drills and checks on all fire fighting equipment. Fire information signs around the home are in different communication formats to assist the young people's understanding.

The home has CCTV on external access points. There is also internal CCTV in the bedrooms. This is only used where there are health or behaviour concerns noted in young people's care and placement plans which justify its use, and this is signed off by parents, social workers and the managers of the home.

Leadership and management

good

The home has had the same registered manager since it opened in August 2011, who is appropriately qualified.

At the last, interim, inspection in January 2014 one recommendation was made. This was for the home to ensure that where CCTV cameras were used in bedrooms at night to safeguard young people the placing authority and parents agreed to this. The home now ensures this documentation is maintained on young people's files.

The home's leaders and managers have high expectations for the service and the staff team. These ideals are consistently and effectively communicated to the staff team and include recognition of the need to continually develop and improve the service. The home's leadership is also very enthusiastic about the service the home provides and proud of the team. The home's managers have clear plans and a vision for the future direction of the home.

The staff team are exceptionally well-trained, child-focused and committed to the young people, their parents and the home. Staff are very dynamic, enthusiastic and proactive about achieving outstanding outcomes for young people. They are driven not only to provide the best possible care for the young people but also to challenge any inequalities the young people may face.

The home has a very stable and well trained staff team who are extremely competent in their roles. The training schedule the staff undertake is excellent and includes space for staff to be able to put forward ideas for training they feel may enhance the teams work. Managers stay abreast of developments in their field and ensure staff receive training in these areas. Staff training is robustly monitored and discussions on training needs form part of team meetings, supervision and annual appraisals.

Staff report that they receive excellent levels of informal and formal support. This is reflected in the supervision records of existing staff but not consistently supported by supervision records of new staff. The home's policy states that new staff will receive supervision every two weeks. This is not consistently happening in practice, even when issues have been identified. In addition, new staff have probationary meetings with their supervisor every four, ten, sixteen, twenty and twenty six weeks. Records of these sessions note that new staff's practice is discussed but do not consistently record the issues that have been raised and whether they have been addressed. Both of these omissions could potentially lead to poor practice continuing.

Since the last inspection there have been six new members of staff recruited. All new staff have to go through a thorough induction process. This includes shadow shifts with other staff and observed practice by the manager. New staff interviewed say

this was a really valuable process and equipped them very well for the role they were undertaking. They also say that managers ask for feedback on the induction so as to further improve it for the next new staff.

Staff are extremely complimentary about the managers of the home. They say they are very approachable and really understand the work they are undertaking as they have done this work themselves.

Multi-disciplinary working is a real strength of the service. Staff communicate effectively with each other and with parents and fellow professionals. A number of parents and fellow professionals compliment the team on this area of their work. They also praise them for their ability to be flexible with arrangements and the rapid response they get to any questions or suggestions.

There are robust monitoring systems in place which cover all the work the home undertakes. These systems should enable the manager to evaluate the home's work and the practice of the staff team and ensure any issues are quickly identified and addressed. However, they did not identify the shortfall in the frequency of supervision for new staff.

Recent Regulation 33 visits and reports were completed by the registered provider as the home's management team had been unable to find an independent person with the experience and rigour to take on this role. However, from August 2014 an independent person will begin carrying out the Regulations 33 visits, initially on a three month contract.

The home maintains all the required records. These are securely stored and maintained to a high standard.

What inspection judgements mean

| Judgement | Description |
|-------------|---|
| 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. |

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.

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