

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC007290
Inspection date	19/03/2013
Inspector	Joanna Heller
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	14/11/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is one of two privately owned children's homes in the area operated by the same provider. It provides accommodation and support to four young people of either sex, aged between 11 and 18 years old. The home is registered to care for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties and young people with a mild mental disorder.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Good progress	The children's home has demonstrated continued improvement in quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the large majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Satisfactory progress	The children's home has maintained quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Inadequate progress	The children's home has failed to address one or more requirements and/or has not met the majority of recommendations and/or the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people have declined since the last full inspection.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **satisfactory progress**.

At the previous inspection in November 2012, the home was judged good overall with outstanding judgements in quality of care and leadership and management. Two recommendations were made at that inspection; these related to verifying references for prospective staff and ensuring the fire risk assessment is sufficiently detailed.

No staff have been employed since the last inspection. However, the manager is planning to recruit staff in the next few months and confirms that telephone calls to verify the validity of references will take place. This will reinforce the otherwise robust vetting practices that safeguard young people from unsuitable people gaining employment in the home. The manager has liaised with the local fire brigade to review fire precautionary arrangements in the home. The arrangements meet the current requirements; however, the manager plans to enhance these. The risk assessment is being currently reviewed to reflect these improvements.

Young people living in the home speak very fondly of staff, who they refer to as caring and nice people. Some young people refer to staff who go 'above and beyond'. All feel safe and rated the home as good. It is clear that these positive relationships underpin individualised child-focused care and enable young people to thrive. Young people benefit from a well-trained and competent group of staff. The home has a strong therapeutic grounding and staff have regular training in therapeutic approaches to care. Staff monitor young people's progress and keep parents and placing authorities up to date on key events as appropriate.

Safeguarding is central to staff practice in the home and staff have been successful in helping young people reduce some of their risk-taking behaviour. Young people say that the home is generally a calm and quiet place. One young person characterised this by saying, 'I'm much calmer and I don't get angry so quickly now.' Staff are passionate in ensuring positive outcomes for the young people and are committed to on-going training and development. Staff are well supported by the manager and responsible individual; these relationships ensure there is a strong ethos of teamwork, and staff changes are very rare. This means young people benefit from continuity of staff and enables the strong relationships between staff and young people to develop.

The home has strong leadership arrangements; the responsible individual has high expectations for staff and leads by example. The manager ensures that the quality of care provided to young people remains at the forefront of service delivery. Placing authorities are highly complimentary both about the care and regarding the relationships that the manager and staff build with the social workers.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that avoidable hazards are removed; in particular review the fire risk assessment to ensure that it is sufficiently detailed, outlines the fire precautionary arrangements in place and how risks will be minimised. (NMS 10.3)

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 progress made by the provider since the last full inspection, identifies any further strengths, any areas for improvement and makes judgements as outlined in the *Inspection of children's homes – framework for inspection*.