

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	27/03/2014
Inspector	Tola Akinde-Hummel
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	28/10/2013
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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**.

The home had a full Ofsted inspection in October 2013. The overall effectiveness of the service was judged as good.

The previous inspection identified one requirement and one recommendation. The requirement came as a result of a lack of monitoring reports provided to Ofsted. The recommendation related to the clarity of children's records kept in the home.

The home has met the requirement. Monitoring reports are sent to Ofsted, outlining how they have addressed the needs of children and young people; they also record where they have made limited progress and give some explanations as to why and how the home intend to rectify this.

The recommendation has not been met. Some information about young people lacks detail and clear direction.

Staff rely too heavily on verbal communication and case recording to determine how they work with young people.

Care plans are non-specific, relying on information recorded elsewhere and the assumption that the reader knows where to find the information. The care plans contain vague statements about how support will be offered but does not commit to a plan of action or include useful timescales to deliver the support. This may produce inconsistencies in the way staff assist young people.

Behaviour management plans and risk assessments do not sufficiently detail the level of risk associated with particular behaviour and how to effectively manage these. This could result in staff being unable to support young people or minimise known risks appropriately due to the lack of detail contained in key documents. The recent monitoring of these documents has highlighted this as an issue but these have yet to be amended.

The home have been unable to establish boundaries with young people. Despite having a number of written contracts, breaches of these do not result in any consequence for young people. The behaviour plans do not specify what types of sanctions the home might use to help modify behaviour. Therefore young people do not experience any consequences for their actions or reflect in any useful way on their behaviour. This means that staff lack any authority to influence effective change in young people.

As with the sister home, young people are reluctant to engage in education or training during their stay. The staff facilitate and work with professionals to access education, health and training opportunities. Routines in the home promote the opportunity for young people to attend education, leisure and medical appointments. Young people agree to attend initially then refuse to continue. The home has supported home tuition when mainstream resources have failed. Young people still remain demotivated despite rewards and incentives offered to support their participation.

Young people invest little in the placement and one young person spoken to is far from complimentary about the home and the staff. Another young person chose to return to the home, is making minimal effort to engage in services on offer but does communicate appropriately with staff when he is in the home.

Social work professionals believe that the home has made plenty of attempts to engage young people who also refuse to engage with all other services. Young people avoid contact with most figures of authority and want to be left alone. One social worker said, 'The home has been very good. I have no issue in respect of their commitment to the young people or their relationship with me.'

The home is predominantly staffed by women. The most recent placements have been young men. The staff are dealing with the challenging behaviour of some young people living there. There have been verbal threats, intimidation and an assault on staff and on one occasion; a visiting professional. The atmosphere in the

home is tense and staff have some anxiety about working with particular young people. This has a direct impact on the ability to deliver the care and support required. The lack of a more gender-balanced team may have an impact on the behaviour of young people currently in the home.

The home appropriately notifies Ofsted and the network of professionals with regards to significant incidents concerning young people.

The staff team receive regular supervision and attend team meetings. Discussions focus on gaining a greater understanding of the needs of young people, raising the standard of care and working more effectively as a team.

The home's relationships with statutory and voluntary professionals is good and this promotes joined up thinking and working. One social worker said, 'I have been able to rely on them to do pieces of work that I have not been able to do myself.'

The décor in the home is functional and could benefit from modernising to make the environment more age appropriate, visually stimulating and welcoming for young people to live in.

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
17 (2001)	keep under review and where appropriate revise the behaviour management policy (Regulation 17 (2))	30/05/2014
28 (2001)	shall maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which includes the information, documents and records specified in schedule 3 relating to that child (with specific reference to the home's care plans, individual behaviour plans and risk assessments) (Regulation 28 (1) (a), (b), (c))	30/05/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and are understood by staff and children. (NMS 3.8)

- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that the staff group who are day-to-day contact with the children includes staff of both genders wherever possible. (MNS 17.10).

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*.