

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Rachel Ruth Britten
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	02/10/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The setting is a family-sized home. Care is provided for two young people of either sex who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. A private company owns and operates this setting.

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**.

Since the last full inspection in October 2013, the home has maintained a good quality of care and adequate outcomes for young people. Three young people have been in placement at different times during the three month period since the full inspection. The young person in placement at the time of the last inspection disengaged from education despite various creative efforts to find alternatives. This, combined with going missing, led to an early, appropriately made multi-agency decision for a move to a setting with education on site. This safeguarded the young person promptly. Another young person was accommodated for one night on an emergency basis and subsequently moved a safer, more rural setting to meet the young person's needs. The young person currently in placement is appropriately placed and settling in well. The home provides for him to continue at his local school and with his social and family contacts. After just three weeks it is too early to see improvements in all his outcomes, but he is engaging well with all staff and enjoying a variety of healthy social experiences within good daily routines.

The home has addressed all three of the requirements and two of the three

recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection. This benefits young people because management and safeguarding procedures are improved in specific ways. However, the manager's monitoring documents continue to be too general in terms of what the home aims to do and the systems that are in place. There is still little analysis of the actual work done or not done, and events during the periods being reviewed. As a consequence, trends, strengths, weaknesses and areas on which to focus training, support, and effective practice, are still not identified through this process.

The organisation has revised its lengthy monitoring system document and the new format aims to achieve more effective monitoring. However, this has yet to be implemented. In addition, the monthly visits made under Regulation 33 lack challenge, evaluation of practice and outcomes. These visits often focus on periods of time some weeks prior to the visit itself. This means that recent and current concerns, sometimes regarding different young people now in placement, are not reviewed in a timely way. This significantly holds back the usefulness of these visits and reports for the home manager. Monitoring activity remains ineffective and the home's leadership and management are weakened as a result. Whilst there is no direct impact on young people, there is potential for this if any poor practice is not identified. Two recommendations are raised regarding this, one of which is raised for the second time.

The care in the home, provided by a small, experienced staff team continues to be of good quality. The home's Statement of Purpose has been amended, as required at the last inspection, to explain how the female staff group is supplemented in order to provide positive male role models to young people. For example, local community homes in the organisation share male outreach workers. Similarly, male workers from other local homes in the organisation arrange to undertake specific activities with young people, such as going to a football match. There is also a male community police officer who is a regular visitor to the home. Furthermore, a male member of staff is shortly going to join the team.

The manager and staff are now more robust about the reporting of significant events to Ofsted, in accordance with the spirit of the children's home regulation and schedule. Staff are considering the safeguarding implications and are notifying Ofsted about these appropriately. For example, when young people go missing and are thought to be at risk of sexual exploitation. Furthermore, the content of these notifications indicates that there is good quality safeguarding practice to assure young people's safety.

The home's long standing manager has made renewed efforts to improve her leadership following the judgement of adequate at the last full inspection. She has completed the requirement and two recommendations related to safeguarding young people. Firstly, she is clearer about her responsibilities to ensure that the record of complaints shows all the action taken in response to any complaint and the outcome of the investigation. Secondly, she has now established a working relationship with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where consultations about allegations and concerns can be shared early. She ensures that the home's own record is

comprehensive and that close liaison with head office ensures that any outcome summaries for staff following allegations are completed correctly and sent in a timely manner. This safeguards young people and staff and meet the previous requirement and recommendation. Thirdly, the manager has ensured that the organisation establishes regular refresher level one child protection training for all staff. This is by way of a training pack produced by the NSCPCC. In addition, she is arranging for her staff to attend level two child protection training provided by the local authority in which the home is situated. This aims to benefit staff both in their practice and in terms of networking with local agencies and professionals.

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 monthly visits by the home's visitor under Regulation 33 provide relevant, timely scrutiny and challenge regarding the home's approach to behaviour management and how it is supporting children to enjoy and achieve (Volume 5 children's homes guidance, paragraph 3.12)
- ensure that there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home. This includes any serious incidents, allegations and complaints about the provision. (NMS 21.1)

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*.