

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Elaine Cray
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Date of last inspection	12/09/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is part of a large private children's care organisation and is registered to accommodate five boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties or a learning disability. The home offers a therapeutic service to boys with assessed needs linked to sexually-inappropriate behaviour. The home has a school on a site and this is registered with the Department for Education.

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 **good** progress.

A full inspection was carried out in September 2011 and the home was given an overall effectiveness judgement of satisfactory. Seven statutory requirements and nine recommendations were made as a result of the last inspection. This interim inspection judged progress made since the last inspection.

The home has made good progress since the last inspection. Developments and improvements have been made to ensure young people are well cared for and kept safe.

Two of the statutory requirements and five recommendations related to shortfalls in behaviour management and the use of physical restraint in the home. While some initial records since the last inspection lack consistency, there is clear improvement. The most recent incidents in the home have been effectively managed with clear and accountable strategies to protect young people. Young people comment that they feel much safer in the home, they do not experience such a high level of physical

intervention and staff talk to them more.

All staff, including agency staff, are trained in the home's behaviour management and physical intervention procedures. Behaviour management plans are detailed and give clarity regarding the circumstances and measures of restraint that may be used. Young people are reassured that the measures of restraint used are proportionate and no more force is used than is necessary. They talked about incidents in the home and acknowledge and understand that the physical intervention used by staff has been appropriately used due to the danger presented to others.

The behaviour management procedures are improved and reinforced by clear risk assessment procedures. There are also more detailed recording processes for young people to talk about incidents when they have been physically restrained. The use of ground floor restraint, as identified at the last inspection, may only be used as a last resort. Behaviour plans and risk assessment documentation now clearly state this expectation and review all incidents where this or any physical intervention has taken place. While records have been completed for all incidents occurring in the home, the new improved de-briefing forms for young people and full risk management forms had not been used for one incident in the home.

The recommendation, to ensure that methods to de-escalate confrontations or potentially violent behaviour are used, has been addressed. Young people are supported with individualised behaviour management plans which are discussed and agreed with them. There is a clear focus on young people taking responsibility for their own behaviour and looking at how staff support helps them. Young people are empowered and listened to and there is less focus on the staff controlling and containing the young people's behaviour.

In line with the above recommendation, the staff were asked to provide an environment and culture that supports, promotes and models positive behaviour. Young people say they now understand why staff do what they do. They compare a previous culture of not really understanding why things happened to currently where they are consulted and involved in their care. Young people particularly value how they are now involved in drawing up risk management strategies. They value how staff have listened about why different types of physical intervention make some behaviours worse. They feel they are treated more as individuals. Young people say they feel less angry and agitated. They are proud of their achievements and enjoy the praise and reward given to them by staff. This change in culture is comprehensively and proactively reflected in the behaviour management and care plans for each young person.

These changes in culture have significantly impacted on the recommendation regarding staff understanding their role in helping to prevent and counter bullying by any adult or child living or working in the home. The existing 'bully-busting' sessions and meetings continue. There is also a more individualised approach to discussing the impact of behaviour on others in both key working and therapy sessions. Young people are beginning to acknowledge their own role in the group and most positively explore alternative ways to manage relationships with their peers. Young people are

feeling better about themselves and, therefore, present a greater awareness of how they might oppress or control their peers. Young people still acknowledge some level of bullying in the home but are confident that incidents are challenged and managed.

The service was also asked to carry out regular reviews of incidents of challenging behaviour. The most recent improvements in behaviour management strategies, the recording processes and risk management reviews have reinforced the existing monthly manager checks and the independent monitoring visits to the home. The processes in place clearly examine trends and have impacted on the significant and ongoing improvements made in terms of behaviour management in the home.

The requirement, to ensure all events as listed in Schedule 5 are notified, has been fully addressed by the service.

The improvements in staff training in behaviour management are complemented with all staff completing child protection training. These actions address the requirement to ensure there are sufficient suitably-qualified, competent and experienced staff in the home. Staffing arrangements have also improved in terms of the numbers of staff. This directly impacts on the two remaining requirements, to ensure that young people are supported with family contact arrangements and that they are provided with a good range of activities.

Young people report they are supported and facilitated to have contact with their families. There are enough staff on duty to support supervised contact and travel arrangements. There are also sufficient staff to support young people who have leisure and sporting commitments. Plans for contact, young people's team sports and other activities are clearly documented. This includes recording in the home's diary, on weekly activity planners, on shift organiser forms and within the staff rota. Young people benefit from clear and improved strategies to manage appropriate contact arrangements with families. Working in partnership with families, social workers and safeguarding agencies has improved young people's self-esteem and impacted on their safety and welfare.

Young people feel very positive about the shift in culture at the home; they feel more included both in their placements and the running of the home. Therefore, the recommendation to ensure children's views, wishes and feelings are included in the day-to-day running of the home is met. Young people also understand and respect the reasoning for when wishes or concerns are not acted upon. They say they are helped to understand why because staff talk to them. Young people are also enthusiastic about the developments to ensure their wishes, feelings and views are taken into account in monitoring staff and in developing the home, as also recommended at the last inspection.

The manager now attends all young people's meetings and is now on some shifts to have individual time with young people at their request. Young people being more involved in their placement and behaviour management plans is integral to this process of empowerment and participation in the home. Young people have had young people's meetings to discuss the decoration of the home. They have chosen

new pictures and are currently looking at sponsoring a dog for the deaf instead of having a house pet.

Young people appreciate that the recommendation to fix the cooker and improve the furnishing in the lounge has been addressed and they look forward to the forthcoming redecoration of the house. However, while there is a selection of communal areas for young people to use, there is little scope to relax and enjoy individual and private time or activities. Young people do not have a TV in their bedrooms and they have to negotiate as a group regarding watching programmes in the lounge. This activity may also clash with some young people wanting to play on the computer console. These pressures often impact negatively on group dynamics, decision-making and lead to conflict. The physical environment is, therefore, not used to its full potential and does not facilitate the privacy and individual choices of the young people.

Young people living at this home present complex risks and behaviours which impact on managing their free time and developing skills and confidence for independent living. As recommended at the last inspection, the manager has reviewed the risk assessment process in relation to young people's preparation for independence.

Packages are in place in relation to young people learning domestic and budgeting skills. More recently young people have been involved in drawing up practical strategies to encourage them to take appropriate risks as a normal part of growing up; this is particularly in relation to how they spend time away from the home. Young people clearly value and respect the small steps of responsibility and trust that they are given. This includes having free time in the community, visiting friends and having a mobile phone. Young people invest in their plans because staff include them in drawing these up, as well as implementing and reviewing the plans. Plans are meaningful because they include the individual challenges and experiences of each young person. Goals are personalised. Young people accept the close monitoring that is required. They understand that they must demonstrate clear levels of responsibility that are essential for them to reach their potential and live safely in their communities.

This home has responded to, and met, the statutory requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection. There has been a recent change in manager, who continues to drive forward improvements to the service. There are clear development plans to promote improvement with both short- and long-term goals. While the quality of care is improving, there is a shortfall in how the environment limits privacy and choice. Additionally, the review and recording of the use of physical intervention in the home are not fully consistent.

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
11 (2001)	ensure the home is conducted in a manner that respects the privacy of the children living there. This is with particular regard to the physical environment in the home. (Regulation 11 (2) (a))	30/04/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home carries out regular reviews of incidents of challenging behaviour, examines trends or issues emerging from this, to enable staff to reflect and learn to inform future practice. This is with particular regard to ensuring consistent use of the recording processes in the home. (NMS 3.21)

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 (March 2011)*.