

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC020594
Inspection date	15/02/2013
Inspector	David Morgan
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	10/09/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides accommodation for up to 10 young people aged from 11 to 17 years, most of who are placed on an emergency basis following a recent history of placement breakdown and difficult or high-risk behaviour. The home undertakes assessments, for up to three months, of young people in crisis.

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**.

This additional interim inspection occurred in order to consider matters arising since the last inspection, when the service was judged to be making satisfactory progress. It finds that such progress has been maintained overall, but that a number of areas require attention, in particular some staffing arrangements.

There is satisfactory management of the service, although this has been affected by the resignation last year of the deputy manager. Progress has been made with the previous recommendations. The manager has begun to implement a new staff training programme and further work is planned to ensure staff are as competent as possible to meet children and young people's needs. A new placement plan format has now been introduced. This gives a more accurate tool for staff to assess and adjust the care provided to children and young people. These are supplemented well by care review documents that show the progress made by individuals.

Risk assessments are mostly up to date, although they are not yet in place for each

of the sites that children and young people use when they are away. The wide range and number of off-site venues and overnight facilities are an intrinsic part of the service to children and young people and pose a range of distinct risks. The registered person does not plan, review or monitor the necessary formal assessment of these risks to keep children and young people safe. In other regards, the physical safety of children and young people is addressed well. Routine servicing of equipment occurs, for example, adequate arrangements are made in extreme weather conditions and for vehicle checks, and fire safety checks occur in a timely way. However, fire drills do not take into account the variety of scenarios necessary to fully train all staff and avoid the risk of complacency.

The safeguarding of children and young people is addressed well. The needs of children and young people are assessed in detail and staff are allocated with due consideration of their number, gender and experience. All children and young people receive the support of at least one or two staff at all times, depending on the level of risk. This helps to ensure that residents are safe from themselves and each other. As a result, most children and young people break, or substantially reduce, their patterns of negative behaviours and benefit more substantially from the educational and recreational opportunities on offer. Staff ensure that any negative behaviour is anticipated and de-escalated wherever possible. This means that instances of physical intervention and children and young people going missing are minimised. However, the views of children and young people are not usually recorded in the physical intervention log. This means there is insufficient evidence that they have received adequate support.

Staffing arrangements are adequate overall, but vacancies are affecting approximately 16% of posts. This creates uncertainty and instability in the team despite appropriate interim arrangements to cover long-term sickness. In addition, approximately 23% of staff are in their probationary periods and therefore require additional support. This does not happen in all cases and individual supervision meetings at all levels, including for the manager, show a significant shortfall over long periods, with no adequate remedial action. This also has a direct effect on the ability of new staff to complete induction work book training.

A representative of the organisation, and also the manager, undertake regular monitoring. Other monitoring is completed on the educational support provided to children and young people and there is thorough attention given to their outdoor activities. However, the monitoring undertaken by the organisation is not sufficiently robust. It does not always include interviews with children, young people or staff. Also, evaluations are not clearly based on accurate information regarding, for example, outcomes for children and young people and the latest conditions of registration. Monitoring by the manager identifies gaps in provision but does not show how the service will be improved, as required.

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
23 (2001)	ensure that any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably practicable free from avoidable risks. This is with regard to the assessment of overnight sites used when away from the home (Regulation 23 (b))	25/03/2013
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate supervision (Regulation 27(4)(a))	25/03/2013
33 (2001)	ensure that monthly monitoring visitors interview, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working in the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. This is also with regard to evaluations being clearly based on facts (Regulation 33(4)(a))	25/03/2013
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. (Regulation 34(1)(b))	25/03/2013

Recommendations

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

- encourage children to have their views of sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint recorded in the records (NMS 3.18)
- apply the emergency escape plan so that all staff and children are familiar with it and have practiced so they know what to do in an emergency. This is with regard to ensuring all staff undertake unannounced fire drills that use different scenarios (NMS 10.9)
- ensure that there is a good quality learning and development programme which staff are supported to undertake. In particular, staff should receive specialist training to equip them to fulfil the aims of the home, as stated in the statement of purpose, and complete induction training in a timely way. (NMS 18.1)

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*.