

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	24/10/2013
Inspector	Julian Mason
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	13/06/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides accommodation for up to 10 young people 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**.

At the last full inspection that was carried out in June 2013, the overall effectiveness of the centre was judged as good. Two recommendations for improvement were made that related to the need for missing from care records to be fully completed and to ensure information about each young person is recorded clearly and in a way that is helpful and accessible. Both these recommendations have now been addressed through improved administration and staff practices.

The safety and welfare of young people continues to be a priority for the Registered Manager and the staff team. The centre has experienced a considerable period of challenge and difficulty. Numerous notifications have been made to Ofsted and other agencies about significant events that have impacted on young people's safety and welfare. Some young people continue to struggle to engage fully in their outward-bound programmes because of their circumstances and past experiences. Difficult-to-manage and risky behaviours have resulted in an increase in police being called to assist staff in the care and control of some young people. When this happens, staff

work hard and in partnership with police officers to help young people gain control of their own behaviour and to ensure that they are safe.

The Registered Manager reviews and evaluates each event to inform necessary changes to risk assessments. As a result of these reviews, changes are made to assessments that help guide staff practice and to potentially reduce these events from happening in the future. In addition, managers from the centre meet with local police officers to promote partnership working and to agree any specific protocols to aid and support staff in their work with young people. For example, a new protocol has been agreed that supports earlier police involvement for those young people who may face significant risks if they go missing from the centre.

The centre's routines and practices continue to promote opportunities for all young people to develop their skills, confidence and self-esteem through participation in tailored outward-bound activities. For some young people, the programme supports the building of effective relationships that encourage positive progress and personal development. However, the ability of the staff team to positively influence all young people is limited; which does impact on the overall progress each individual can make during their short stay at the centre. Staff continue to use feedback and information from young people, families and placing social workers to adapt and shape the care and support needed to help overcome emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Overall, the centre's records reflect important information that is continually used to assess risks and safeguarding arrangements. There is obvious transparency with regard to child protection matters with young people's needs being placed at the hub of everything the centre does. Clear procedures are in place for responding to child protection and safety concerns. There have been a large number of notifications to Ofsted and the Local Authority Designated Officer. Incidents or allegations are dealt with appropriately and in line with wider safeguarding guidance. This means that the home works within a multi-agency framework, as outlined in the centre's policies and procedures, which ensures young people are protected.

Managers and staff complete a range of risk assessments to help guide staff practice and their direct work with young people. Generally, these are reviewed regularly or when circumstances or risks change. There have been some incidents while transporting young people; the risks involved have been considered and risk-reduction measures implemented in practice. However, this cannot be fully demonstrated as written risk assessments are not specific about the issues involved; in particular what items should or should not be accessible to young people within vehicles or whether or not child-safety locks are to be used.

Staff continue to provide practical support to young people who need help with their relationships and social interactions. The Registered Manager provides clear guidance to staff that helps to promote safe boundaries and this approach is further supported by behaviour management guidance; which is kept under review. When young people's behaviour has challenged acceptable boundaries, the home's records generally reflect that a proportionate response is taken. This includes the use of

physical restraint, which is monitored by the Registered Manager although the required written record is not always complete or up to date. In these circumstances, the effective evaluation of these events is slightly reduced although the impact on young people is minimal.

The Registered Manager closely monitors staffing levels and adjusts these where necessary to ensure that young people receive the right support and supervision that matches their needs and circumstances. Overall, the Registered Manager has systems and processes in place to help determine the suitability of newly employed staff to work with young people. Staff recruited to permanent positions do not start work in the centre until all necessary checks have been completed. These systems also include gaining key vetting information from employment agencies when temporary staff are used. However, agency staff profiles do not fully reflect necessary information in relation to work histories or subsequent gaps in employment, for example. Important information is available about criminal record checks and work references but there is a slight increase in risk to young people while the suitability of agency staff is being determined.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24-hours of the use of any measures of control, restraint or discipline, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which shall include all matters outlined in this regulation (Regulation 17B(3)(a-i)(4)(a and b))	30/11/2013
23 (2001)	ensure all parts of the home which young people have access to are so far as reasonably practical free from hazards. This is in relation to the use of vehicles and the assessment of risks (Regulation 23(a))	30/11/2013
26 (2001)	ensure all persons who work at the home are fit to do so and that information is available in respect of each of the matters specified in schedule 2 of this regulation. This relates to the use of agency staff. (Regulation 26(1)(a) and (3)(d))	30/11/2013

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*.