

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC020602
Inspection date	21/02/2012
Inspector	David Morgan
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	17/11/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people of either gender aged between eight and 17 years who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private company.

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.

The judgement at the last full inspection was good. The quality of service provided to young people since then has been maintained and improved in several areas. In particular, there is closer attention to the use of measures of control. This means that young people benefit from more effective steps to help them learn appropriate behaviour. Also, young people benefit from decisions and risk assessments that are more age appropriate, which prepare them better for independence. Independence is also facilitated by the forthcoming installation of a computer with internet access in the communal areas. Young people remain largely positive about their home and are helped to pursue independent lifestyles. They continue to have good relationships with the staff team.

The last inspection made one requirement and seven recommendations. These have all been addressed, along with additional matters that were discussed during the inspection. Decisions and progress have been carefully recorded by the manager to clearly demonstrate the improvements that have occurred. For example, the understanding of young people and staff has been improved by using fire drills as training exercises that simulate a variety of emergency situations. Practical

improvements have also been made to the security of external doors so that exiting the property in an emergency is unhindered. Overall effectiveness is compromised slightly, however, by a small proportion of staff not undertaking evacuation training for extended periods. Training provision in other regards is improving steadily with staff obtaining relevant qualifications and improvements being made by the organisation to training provision generally. Staff are positive about the service they offer to each young person and feel there is a strong team spirit.

Young people benefit from closer management of rewards and measures of control. This includes, for example, more direct input to young people's meetings by the manager and deputy manager so that young people are engaged more fully in deciding on the most effective methods. Individual behaviour management plans have also been adapted to ensure they actually move young people forward. Young people also benefit from less use of door alarms, which makes the communal areas in particular more homely. The negative impact on young people of record keeping is now reduced by more accessible information encouraging young people to see their files.

Significant incidents are recorded well and notified promptly to relevant agencies so that attention is paid quickly to young people's changing needs. However, the monitoring of some records is inaccurate and does not always show that suitable action has taken place. This slightly reduces the ability of staff to adapt their practices to minimise negative incidents. Overall, however, good progress is being made in implementing improvements arising from the last inspection and the home's development plan.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- apply the emergency escape plan so that all staff and children are familiar with it and have practised this so they know what to do in an emergency, with regard to all members of staff undertaking fire evacuations at regular intervals (NMS 10.9)
- ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed, with regard to the monitoring of incidents being accurate and follow-up action being clear. (NMS 22.1)

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 (March 2011)*.