

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	16/01/2012
Inspector	David Morgan
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Provision subtype	Children's home

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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)*.

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a dual-site private children's home. The main house can accommodate three young people and the satellite property can accommodate an additional young person, giving a total of four young people who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **good** progress.

The judgement at the last full inspection was satisfactory. All the requirements and recommendations made then have been addressed or are in hand. The quality of care to young people has been maintained or improved in the two properties as the new manager has become established and team-practices have consolidated. There is continuity of staffing and new referrals are being given careful consideration to ensure appropriate matching of young people occurs. These steps help to ensure young people feel comfortable and secure in their home. Young people are kept safe and feel safe. They know how to raise concerns and their opinions are taken into account, for example, through the use of advocates.

Comprehensive monitoring and review processes are in place, which help to identify any shortfalls. Such processes also contribute to the annual development plan that is regularly checked to ensure that progress is being made. For example, the properties are appropriately maintained and decorated and the manager has measures in place to address any shortfalls. Also, the manager undertakes training sessions with staff in team meetings to ensure their skills are up to date, for example, regarding the specific needs of individual young people. The manager herself is enrolled on a management course that is due to start in the next few months. All staff appraisals are now up to date. These events ensure young people receive appropriate care from competent staff who can contribute to ongoing improvements to the service.

Improvements have also occurred to staff fire drill training. By undertaking different scenarios, staff and young people are taught to treat each event as potentially dangerous and to adapt their actions accordingly. This is an important contribution to the safety of young people. Safety has also been improved by the agreement to install thumb locks on external doors. This means that in the event of an emergency young people and visitors can leave the buildings without waiting for staff. However, the homeliness of one property is compromised inappropriately by the use of a break-glass lock on the back door.

The privacy of young people is compromised unnecessarily in some cases by the use of alarms on their bedroom doors. These alert staff that a young person has left his or her bedroom but are sometimes being used illegitimately. On the other hand,

behaviour management planning is thorough and risks other than the use of bedroom door alarms are addressed well. These changes, plus changes in occupants, mean that young people now receive better protection; improved education, and a higher standard of living.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment by the removal of the break-glass lock on the back door (NMS 10.3)
- implement a written policy regarding electronic devices used to monitor children, including bedroom door alarms, that sets out how they should be used, how they promote the welfare of children, how children will be informed of their use, how legitimate privacy of children will be protected and how children will be protected from potential abuse of such measures. (NMS 10.5)