

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	06/02/2012
Inspector	Mandy Williams
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Date of last inspection	22/09/2011
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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

The home is registered with Ofsted to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people of either sex, aged between 11 and 17 years, who may be experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private organisation.

Progress

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

At the last full inspection in September 2011 the home received an overall effectiveness rating of good. At this time Ofsted asked the provider to make improvements in two areas; the maintenance and décor of the home required attention both internally and externally; and the staff were unclear about responsibilities delegated to them in relation to the administration of non-prescribed medication.

The provider has made good progress in relation to the maintenance and décor of the home. The lounge and dining areas are warm and welcoming. Major improvements in the kitchen are evident, although not yet completed. The hallways have been painted, as too have the young people's bedrooms. At the rear of the property an area of decking has been erected to create a pleasant outdoor seating area for young people. There are further improvements planned and the home's development plan clearly outlines these, such as the planting of flowers in the front garden in the spring. Named staff members have taken the lead in certain areas of development; this has worked well as specific ownership has ensured that the changes have progressed in a timely fashion. Young people have also had the opportunity to assist in some of these tasks and have learnt new skills, as well as received an incentive as a result.

The staff have received clarification in relation to the administration of non-prescribed medication. The home now has a supply of such medication. Suitable arrangements are in place for its storage and the administration.

Young people contribute to the running of the home and their views are actively sought by means of weekly young people's meetings. Young people also have the opportunity to complete a survey form about the operation of the home on a regular basis. Young people say that they feel that staff listen to them and that they are happy living here. They receive support to engage in activities in which they express an interest. Young people could not identify anything that they wished to change in the home but were aware of how to make a complaint should they wish to do so.

The home also encourages family members and involved professionals to comment

on the service they provide. Consultation forms are forwarded on a monthly basis and staff are pro-active in chasing the completion of these, as they provide the basis for continued improvement. Comments from social workers include: 'there are no areas that the team can improve, as they have done more than expected to support and safeguard X'; and from a family member, 'I am kept informed on X's day to day care, I am happy with the care X is getting'.

Both the external and internal monitoring of the home is undertaken routinely and Ofsted have received records of both, as required. These serve to highlight issues in the home that need to be resolved. For example, a minor change to the recording of sanctions. The Registered Manager has implemented the changes required. However, it is not always evident that staff are aware of the issues raised or the timescales around completion of any identified actions, as these have not been signed off in the home's records.

Since the last inspection, the home has demonstrated a commitment to continue to improve the quality of care and outcomes for young people. Considerable improvement works have concluded and staff have worked hard to improve the homely feel of the property. Staff have also been successful in engaging young people in activities in the local community, such as Thai boxing and football. The staff have also promoted healthy eating, as well as the celebration of cultural events. The significance of religious festivals is a topic of discussion in young people's home education and the staff may cook a special meal to celebrate the occasion. This serves to educate young people about different cultures and encourages them to embrace difference. The provider has also introduced a regular forum for managers in the locality to meet up on a regular basis. This has resulted in the sharing of good practice and in the resolution of some problems experienced by young people, being resolved in a timely fashion. This is an efficient practice and one that serves to improve outcomes for young people.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the registered person takes action to address any issues of concern that visits under Regulation 33 identify, in particular that any actions taken by the registered person are recorded and signed off on completion. (NMS 21.9)