

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	20/03/2014
Inspector	Stella Lovie
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	07/01/2014
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home, run by a company, provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities. The home is organised so that it offers both a small family-group type of placement for two young people, and two supported, self-contained, living units.

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 **inadequate progress**.

The home was last inspected in early January 2014. It achieved an overall effectiveness judgement of good, though safeguarding was deemed to be only adequate. One requirement was made in relation to recording when restraint has been used. This has been addressed. Four recommendations to improve practice were identified.

Young people's behaviour in the home continues to be mostly positive. This is effectively promoted through support, praise and assorted incentives. Staff convey clear messages to the young people about making the right choices to keep themselves safe. Where used, sanctions reflect principles of reparation and restitution, and are proportionate. This helps to influence young people's behaviour constructively. There has been no need to use restraint since the last inspection. Staff establish relationships of trust with the young people and are valued for their fair and even-handed approach. As one young person said: 'It's a nice place. Staff are really nice – I'm surprised actually. It's well better than the last place I was in.'

Although all the young people have access to education or work training, they show only limited participation and engagement with these opportunities. This does not promote their future life chances and economic well-being. Similarly, some young people fail to cooperate with health assessments and interventions in relation to both routine and specific health needs. This compromises their physical and emotional well-being. Relevant young people do not yet have pathway plans in place, and there is, as yet, limited structured work with them to develop the full range of independent living skills required to support successful transition to adulthood.

Some young people do not have placement plans, and staff are unable to evidence that they have been adequately assertive in contacting the placing authorities to obtain these. This restricts structured and effective interventions with those young people. Furthermore, staff are also unable to show that they have addressed overdue statutory reviews for young people. This leaves those young people without a clear sense of direction and purpose in their placement. Other young people's care plans have not been reviewed in light of incidents of high risk which suggest the placement's suitability for that young person should be formally considered. This does not promote young people's safety. This is further compounded by the lack of proactive intervention by the home to ensure effective sharing of information held in young people's case files by their placing authorities. Consequently, the home's ability to evaluate risk and devise comprehensive risk management strategies is inhibited.

Young people come to the home with high levels of risk-taking behaviours. Some continue to put themselves at risk by going missing from the home. There is limited evidence of effective return interviews with those young people. This undermines the capacity of staff to learn more about the reasons and risks attached to young people going missing, and thereby effect a change in such behaviours.

The Registered Manager continues to monitor the quality and impact of the service. However, the biannual quality assurance reports from this monitoring do not fully capture all the trends and patterns of behaviour by all the young people who have been in the home over the reporting period. This means that opportunities to consider improvements that may be needed are missed. In addition, the manager cannot demonstrate an adequate response to the improvement plan identified in the previous inspection. This fails to show commitment to addressing shortfalls and does not demonstrate capacity for continuing improvement.

The Registered Manager has failed to notify Ofsted in a timely fashion of serious incidents of high risk and harm to young people accommodated in the home. As a result, the regulator is impeded from effectively monitoring the home, again with potential adverse impact on the safety of young people.

There has been no training arranged for staff to help them to understand and manage sexualised behaviour, as recommended in the previous inspection. This means that staff are not equipped with all the skills they need to care for the young people they accept into the home in line with their Statement of Purpose. Similarly,

the recommendation from the last inspection in relation to clear and comprehensive recording of any allegations made against staff has not been addressed. This means that the home cannot easily demonstrate that they have taken all the required action in such situations.

The home is adequately resourced to meet the needs of the young people cared for. It is mostly well maintained, though recent damage by young people to walls has yet to be repaired. There is also limited ability for visitors to indicate their arrival at the home as there are no working door bells on the front doors or other means of attracting staff attention. This does not present a welcoming aspect to the home.

To conclude, the home has failed to meet the majority of the recommendations made in the previous inspection. Young people's outcomes and the quality of care has declined. Consequently the home is making inadequate progress.

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
12A (2001)	cooperate with the child's placing authority in agreeing and signing the plan for the child's placement prepared in accordance with the provisions in regulation 9, or, as the case may be, regulation 47C(2), of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 (Regulation 12A (1))	21/04/2014
16 (2001)	implement a policy which is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the home from abuse and neglect, and which provides for written records to be kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and of the action taken in response (Regulation 16 (1) (a) (2) (d))	21/04/2014
16 (2001)	implement a missing child policy, with particular regard to conducting in-depth return interviews in line with practice guidance (Regulation 16 (4) (b))	21/04/2014
16 (2001)	ensure that, where the registered person considers that a child who is accommodated in the children's home and for whom a care plan has been prepared is at risk of harm, the registered person shall ask the local authority that looks after that child to review that child's care plan (Regulation 16 (6) (b))	21/04/2014
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed by the registered person receive appropriate training, with particular reference to provision of training in the management of sexualised behaviour (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	08/05/2014

30 (2001)	ensure that if, in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 30 (1))	08/05/2014
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Recommendations

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

- ensure the home is well maintained, with particular regard to provision of working door bells or door knockers on the front entrance doors (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that children's physical and emotional health is promoted, with particular regard to attendance at routine and specialist health appointments (NMS 6.1)
- help children to achieve their educational or training goals and work with a child's education provider to maximise each child's achievement and to minimise any underachievement (NMS 8.4)
- support children to develop practical skills such as shopping, buying food, and to develop financial capability, knowledge and skills (NMS 12.1)
- contribute to the development of pathways plans for 'eligible' care leavers, and work collaboratively with the young person's social worker or personal advisor in implementing the plan (NMS 12.2)
- monitor all records kept by the home to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends, with particular reference to the bi-annual report considering all the young people who have been in the home during the reporting period (NMS 21.2)
- work with the responsible authority to ensure effective sharing of information held in the responsible authorities' records, with particular regard to chronologies and previous assessment reports (NMS 22.7)
- contact placing authorities to request statutory reviews if overdue for any child. (NMS 25.5)

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*.