

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Robin Whistlecraft
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Date of last inspection	09/09/2011
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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

This home is registered to accommodate up to four young people of either gender from 14 to 17 years of age. The service is owned by a private company. The home is a semi-detached property situated in a residential suburb. The purpose of the home is to offer young people a service which provides semi-independent living in a supported environment.

Progress

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

At the last inspection in September 2011, the overall quality rating for the service was judged as good, with two recommendations for areas identified for improvement. The home has since reviewed improved the quality of its care in several ways.

At the last inspection, the decoration in the home was found to be tired, carpets were stained and some furniture was worn. Broken furniture was stored in sleep-in rooms, the staff office and in the garden. Since that inspection the home has disposed of the broken furniture, redecorated all the areas where young people are accommodated and provided covers for some of the furniture. This leaves one damaged settee to be replaced. The home has stored unused equipment in the cellar to create a tidier environment for young people.

The home has also had the carpets professionally cleaned pending their replacement, which has subdued the effect of the stains. The home completed the redecoration in February this year, but is only now arranging quotes for replacement carpets. Therefore, the home has been relatively slow in organising the improvements. However, the young people do now benefit from an environment that is now, aside from the carpets, pleasant, homely and welcoming.

Young people are able to personalise their bedrooms. However, some of the material that young people put up in their bedrooms is insensitive to young people's self esteem and developing understanding of sexuality.

The second recommendation made at the last inspection related to keeping records up to date and recording evidence of good practice. The home has been introducing a new range of records and recording processes. The home's new records are detailed and in some circumstances, involve duplication. However, the home's records do now include examples of staff good practice. They are up to date, for example in relation to discussing sexual identity. The home has also introduced an additional record system called 'My Blue Book' that is being used to track the

incidence of certain events, behaviours and performance in relation to young people. This means that managers are able to monitor young people's progress, albeit by examining several sets of records for each young person, and so support staff to be consistent in their dealings with the young people.

The home has changed aspects of the young people's self-catering arrangements in order to improve the impact these have on outcomes for young people. The home has, very recently, increased the number of days that young people have to cater for themselves. The home has also introduced the expectation that when young people select their weekly menu, meals must include food from different food groups. By doing this, the home has increased the amount of practice that young people have with budgeting and cooking. Young people also benefit from an improved diet and understanding of nutrition.

The home provides coaching and information to young people to prepare them for independent living. The home's manager is currently drawing together several resources in order to create a full programme of topics and activities for assessing and coaching young people's knowledge and skills in this area. Currently, staff record the work undertaken when working with young people on independence skills in a variety of places and progress is not routinely assessed. This means that the home cannot be certain about the level of young people's preparedness for living independently.

The home consults young people about aspects of the home; for example, young people choose wall paper for the feature walls that figure in several rooms. The home also responds to young people's requests, either by explaining why something cannot be changed, or by introducing changes. An imaginative example of this is where the home has introduced additional personal spending money for the young people, but made it conditional upon completing specific chores. In this way young people earn the additional cash, and make an extra contribution to the home.

The home has sought to enable reasonable risk-taking by young people. For example, it has undertaken negotiations with other agencies and support staff in order to relax restrictions and test levels of trust, so that, for example, an employment opportunity can be realised.

Interactions between staff and young people are generally warm and friendly, with both sides exchanging good-humoured banter. Young people confirm that there is no bullying between young people, and that they feel safe in the company of staff. One young person said that the best thing about the home was the staff because they 'support and encourage, and give you space.'

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 staff support children's developing social and emotional development and enable young people to develop emotional resilience and self-esteem. This is in relation to the content of material young people are allowed to display on their bedroom walls (NMS 2.2)
- ensure that young people prepare for moving into their own accommodation. This is in relation to systematically assessing and recording young people's progress in acquiring the skills and knowledge for independent living. (NMS 12.1).