

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	09/02/2012
Inspector	Elizabeth Tanner / Chris Scully
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	08/06/2011
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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 is a children's home for six young people of either gender from 10 years to 17 years. The home cares for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and drug or alcohol dependence, from many parts of England and Wales. The home is owned by a private company.

Progress

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

At the last inspection in June 2011 the overall effectiveness for this home was judged to be good.

Three statutory requirements and three recommendations were made at that inspection. The requirements related to young people's care plans, the independent living flat and notifications. The recommendations made were in respect of risk assessments for the independent living accommodation, the recording of medication and training records.

The home has improved the quality of information it obtains in respect of young people at the point of moving to their care. One young person's file was examined and the required information was accessible including information about medical consent and contact details. This means young people can be cared for in a safe and consistent manner.

The independent living flat has been improved in terms of decoration and the safety issues that were raised at the last inspection addressed. However, it is no longer being used by young people and is now being used for storage and administration. Young people do not have access to this area and so are protected from any hazards. The Statement of Purpose and young person's guide are to be amended accordingly to ensure all young people and placing authorities are clear as to the facilities offered at the home. This has not been completed but the Registered Manager is aware of this need and it is being addressed.

Controlled medication is dispensed in a safe manner and is being recorded appropriately. This means young people are protected from the risk of harm from incorrect administration of these medications. However, it was identified on this inspection that the strength of the antibiotic and analgesic medicines being dispensed were not always reflected in the paper work. This impacts upon staff ability to safely dispense some medications and a recommendation is to be made about this.

New systems are in place to ensure that the training of staff is accurately recorded. This records the courses completed and those planned. The home works with a training officer who is based in their head office to ensure the need for refresher courses are identified in good time. This system is much improved and ensures staff are able to maintain professional standards by ongoing training which will inform good quality care for young people.

The last inspection identified risk assessments as being required for the house and in particular for the flat used for independent living by young people. This flat is no longer being used for this purpose but hazards have been removed. This inspection did identify the need for further risk assessments in the home and in particular the grounds. The garden had a number of objects in it that could have been a risk to young people. The boundary to the property is not clear and fencing is falling down with rusty nails exposed. In discussion with staff it was clear that risks had been considered and young people were protected because staff had awareness of the issues, but these risks had not formally been assessed or placed in writing.

The Registered Manager confirmed that the expected systems for the monitoring of the home and improving the quality of care provided are in place. Reports are completed as required but to date have not been sent to Ofsted. Because the system is in place the impact of this omission on young people is minimal.

Young people said on this inspection that the home was good. Relaxed interactions were noted between staff and young people. The staff group is stable and there have been few changes in staffing since the last inspection. Young people are supported to make progress in several areas of their lives. The improvement most highlighted is young people's engagement in education. Young people are attending educational placements and school and are making steady progress with some making very good progress. There have been improvements in outcomes for young people in this area.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure risk assessments of the whole children's home environment are carried out to identify any potential sources of harm to the children and are recorded in writing and regularly reviewed. This is with particular regard to the back garden area (NMS 10.8)
- ensure the written record of all medication given to children during their placement is clear as to the strength and amount of medication being administered (NMS 6.15)
- ensure that reports reviewing the quality of care under Regulation 34 are supplied to Ofsted at six monthly intervals within 28 days of completion.

(Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 3.14)