

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC025657
Inspection date	30/10/2012
Inspector	David Putnam
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	25/07/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately run children's home is registered provide care and accommodation for up to seven children and young people. The home provides both permanent and short breaks placements in two different buildings that are joined by a connecting door.

The home is registered to care for children and young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties, learning disabilities and physical disabilities. However, the building is not fully accessible or adapted, meaning that placement of children and young people with significant mobility problems would not be appropriate.

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**.

At the last full inspection the overall effectiveness of the home was judged to be inadequate. To bring about urgent improvement, 16 requirements and two recommendations were made. The Registered Manager submitted an action plan to Ofsted clearly suggesting that appropriate action had been taken to address all these matters. This inspection has identified that this action plan was misleading. Action has been taken to address the recommendations and some requirements. However, eight of the requirements have not been met. This represents inadequate progress in improving the quality of service for children and young people. These repeated shortfalls lead the inspector to conclude that the registered person continues to fail

to promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated in this home.

Information contained in children and young people's files does not meet the required standards. This means that staff do not have the information they need to provide appropriate care. Important information is missing. For example, no placement plan could be found from an authority that placed one child permanently, more than six weeks ago. No clear guidance exists as to how staff will meet this child's specific needs. Managers and staff have failed to produce their own care plan or behaviour management plan for this child. Furthermore, health and medication information recorded on the child's file relates to a different child, potentially putting them at risk.

Records relating to the recruitment of staff have improved. Certain gaps in required information have now been filled. However, the inspector found that the quality of references obtained for some staff cannot be relied upon. Fundamentally this means that checks of staff remain incomplete.

The safety of children and young people is further jeopardised through the lack of certain core training. New staff and the Registered Manager have registered to complete on-line child protection training. Some have begun modules, but these have not been completed.

Risk assessments remain ineffective as the welfare and safety of children and young people are still not properly addressed. Although children and young people do engage in a range of activities outside the home, risk assessments of these activities are still not undertaken. The action plan stated that new risk assessments had been produced. These are generic documents which only relate to transporting children and young people to and from school or activities. The individual circumstances and needs of children and young people are not considered. Documents are virtually identical, to the extent that on some, the gender of children and young people is not accurately reflected.

Managers continue to fail to support, challenge and develop staff through regular supervision. The performance of staff is also not appraised annually. The home's action plan stated that, 'supervision and appraisals are now up to date'. However, files seen indicate that staff have not received supervision since before the last inspection. This is contrary to the home's Statement of Purpose which says that staff will have supervision every four to six weeks. No records of appraisal were found. The Registered Manager confirmed that no appraisals had taken place during this year.

The Statement of Purpose remains unclear. Despite additional information being included in the document, not all required matters are addressed. This means that parents and placing authorities cannot be clear about all aspects of the service provided by the home.

The Registered Manager continues to fail to review the quality of care at appropriate

intervals or identify ways to improve it. Consequently, no copy of any review report has been submitted to Ofsted. This represents a repeated failure to meet a requirement as this was replicated at the last inspection. This results in the Registered Manager having a poor understanding of the strengths, but particularly the weaknesses of the home. The Registered Manager has relied upon the inspection process to identify areas for improvement but has failed to address these adequately.

The Registered Manager fails to keep up to date with new legislation and practice developments. The inspector identified that previous versions of Children's Homes Regulations and national minimum standards were still being referred to more than 18 months after being amended. Furthermore, the Registered Manager stated that he did not have copies of public documents outlining the inspection process.

The registered provider recently failed to inform Ofsted when the Registered Manager was absent as a result of an emergency. Even when prompted he was slow to respond and failed to provide all necessary information. No response has been received following a further request for full information to be supplied.

Improvements have been made through the responses to other requirements and recommendations. Children and young people benefit from increased involvement in activities in the wider community. Some attended Olympic events and celebrations of the Queen's jubilee during the summer. Children and young people now have a more accessible guide about the service. This is written in more straightforward language and produced in a way that supports staff to communicate key messages. Children and young people now enjoy higher standards of cleanliness in all areas of the home. Updated policies provide increased clarity regarding child protection procedures and the management of behaviour. Reports of monthly monitoring visits are now more evaluative and include consultation with parents and reflect observations and interactions with children and young people. Parents have also been consulted to help produce a brief, but adequate development plan.

While it is recognised that some improvements have been made, significant concerns remain about the quality of service provided to children and young people in this setting.

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
4 (2001)	compile in relation to the children's home a written statement (in these Regulations referred to as 'the statement of purpose') which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in	07/12/2012

	Schedule 1 (Regulation 4(1)) *	
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated there (Regulation 11(1)) *	07/12/2012
12A (2001)	ensure that in the case of a child who is looked after by a local authority the registered person must co-operate with the child's placing authority in agreeing and signing the plan for the child's placement (Regulation 12A(1)) *	07/12/2012
23 (2001)	ensure that any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably practicable free from avoidable risks (Regulation 23(b)) *	07/12/2012
26 (2001)	ensure that no person is employed to work at the children's home unless that person is fit to work at a children's home, in particular that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to him in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2 (Regulation 26(1)(a) and (3)(d)) *	07/12/2012
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed in the children's home received appropriate training, supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27(4)) *	07/12/2012
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in the children's home a record in permanent form which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child and keep that information up to date (Regulation 28(1)(a) and (b)) *	07/12/2012
34 (2001)	ensure that there is a system in place for monitoring matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. Supply to Ofsted a report of any such review (Regulation 34 (1)(a), (b) and (2)) *	07/12/2012
37 (2001)	ensure that when the absence of the registered manager arises as a result of an emergency, the registered person shall give notice of the absence within one week of its occurrence specifying the matters mentioned in sub-paragraphs (a) to (e) of paragraph (2) of this regulation. (Regulation 37(3))	07/12/2012

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice

Recommendations

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

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)*.