

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Cheryl Carter
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	02/06/2011
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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

The provider is a registered childcare charity and housing association. Its motto is being passionate about positive outcomes. The home offers periods of planned care for up to eight children and young people from 12 to 16-years-old. The placements last between three and 18 months, depending on individual needs. The home also caters for emergency admissions for children and young people from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. It aims to create a caring, structured and stimulating environment that is responsive to the individual needs of children and young people. The home focuses on meeting the individual needs of children and young people within a positive group living experience.

Progress

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

At the last inspection in October 2011, the overall rating for the service was judged as satisfactory, with four requirements set within the inspection report. The inspector met with three staff members but none of the young people in the home were willing to meet with the inspector.

Since the last inspection the home has made improvements in all areas and has met or partially met the requirements from the last inspection. Some staff supervision records were seen, however, these did not fully evidence that all staff were receiving supervision as the deputy manager could not gain access to some of the records due to the manager being off sick. Staff appraisals have been completed but these are not of a good standard as they do not identify the learning and training needs of individual staff and how these will be met. Records required according to Schedule 4 have improved with weekly recording of fire tests and monthly fire drills being completed. The record of complaints however, does not fully address the actions and outcomes of complaints. The use of financial sanctions has been reduced and the staff have now developed a system of asking the young person what sanction should be imposed. This does not help staff to evaluate and identify the effectiveness of the measure of control used in helping young people to make changes to their behaviour. Consultation with young people continues to take place in house meetings and key work sessions.

Staff morale in the home is quite low. There has been a restructuring of the staff team which has resulted in the loss of three team leaders. As a result there is an over-reliance on agency and bank staff to cover vacant posts. In addition, there is a threat to cut the wages of some of the residential care staff which could result in staff leaving the organisation. This could impact on the care and stability of the young people in the home. The standards highlight the need to make an effort to

achieve continuity of staff so that young people's attachments are not overly disrupted. Since the last inspection Ofsted has been notified of 36 serious incidents in the home, twelve of these have been in the past four months. There has been a reduction in the number of episodes when young people have gone missing. The home's procedure is compatible with the local Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocol and procedure. The home has also worked closely with the child protection team to reduce young people's risk of harm from exploitation and accident. There are improvements in the home's general practice. Young people receive protection from better record keeping and attendance at the house meetings gives young people an opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and discuss the consequences of their actions.

The home has the capacity to improve. The main issues highlighted during this inspection relate to leadership and management. The deputy manager in the absence of the manager did not have access to all records to fully facilitate the inspection. This raises concerns around accountability in the absence of the manager. There is no development plan for the home that addresses the issues of concern to the staff that impacts on the young people. The reduction in permanent staff and an over reliance on agency staff to cover vacant posts and the impact this may have on the care of the young people. The perception that some staff will have their wages cut and the impact this will have on the young people if staff left the organisation. Staff learning and training needs are not identified as part of their appraisal. These requirements are essential to providing a high quality service.

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 service employs permanent members of staff to work in the home (NMS 17.1)
- devise a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home (NMS 15.2)
- ensure that each staff have personal developmental programme that is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and if necessary updated. (NMS 18.2)