

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sandra Jacobs-Walls
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	10/10/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is privately owned. It is a family business and a majority the staff are family. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children and young people who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

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 **good progress**.

This home is currently judged as adequate overall and at this interim inspection, is judged to be making good progress. Outcomes for young people are positive and the service has successfully addressed all requirements and recommendations raised at the previous inspection. Two requirements are made as a result of this inspection.

Continued improvement is noted in several key areas. The previous inspection noted concern about the conduct of Regulation 33 visits. Previously, there were gaps in the frequency of these visits, and subsequent Regulation 33 reports were insufficiently detailed. Since the last inspection, the home's consultant has resumed the monthly conduct of Regulation 33 visits. These visits comprehensively review the home's operation and reports are now appropriately detailed. This assists the home to effectively review the home's functioning and promote continual improvement.

The previous inspection highlighted that Regulation 34 monitoring reports were insufficiently detailed and so did not assist the home in improving its quality of care. Since the last inspection, the format of the Regulation 34 report has been amended to ensure that all matters as outlined in the regulations are reviewed. The home's

most recent Regulation 34 report is appropriately detailed and provides managers with a good overview of the home's quality of care for the previous six months.

The previous inspection noted concern for the lack of formal supervision provided to the home's Registered Manager. Since the last inspection the Registered Manager has received consistent supervision from the home's consultant. Supervision records are comprehensive and demonstrate that key management and operational issues are thoroughly explored. This was not the case at the last inspection and supports the managers efforts to improve service provision.

The previous inspection resulted in five recommendations. The service now has in place newly devised behavioural management plans for each of the young people. In recent months, the Registered Manager has worked with the consultant to develop and implement new behavioural management systems to help assess and address young people's behavioural issues. New recording tools are also in place to support staff to manage young people's poor and sometimes challenging behaviour effectively. Staff continue to receive training and support in the implementation of these new systems in an effort to promote positive behaviour.

Since the last inspection the Registered Manager has liaised with relevant police personnel to develop localised protocols to manage incidents when young people go missing from the home. The service has an agreement with the missing person's team to continually review joint protocols to help reduce instances of young people going missing and to safeguard young people when they are absent from the home.

The service now ensures that telephone calls are made to verify written references received for newly recruited employees. This was not the case at the last inspection. Since this time two new members of staff have been recruited. The personnel files of these staff evidence that telephone calls to referees had been made to verify written information.

The home's development plan has been revised since the last inspection. The document is now more comprehensive, outlining ambitious and realistic goals to assist the home's continued improvement. For example, the revised document now includes information about the home's plan to offer a more therapeutic approach to working with young people and improving staff's communication and liaison with partner agencies.

The final recommendation made at the last inspection related to establishing a good quality learning and development programme for staff. The Registered Manager has since identified key, more creative training opportunities for staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in caring for vulnerable young people. Training now is a regular feature of team meetings and staff have access to training facilitated by the host local authority. Recent training now available to staff includes workshops on child sexual exploitation, attachment theory, neglect, and gang culture.

Young people continue to feel safe in their placement and feel that relationships with the staff group are generally very positive. The home pays good attention to the

educational needs of young people and encourages their engagement with appropriate educational resources. Young people benefit from the home's clear behavioural management strategies and feel that staff impose sanctions fairly. Bullying is not an issue for the home and there have been no incidents where young people have been restrained. Young people are aware of the home's complaints procedure, and since the last inspection one complaint has been made by a young person against the home.

The complaint made was in relation to alleged comments made by a staff member about the lifestyle of one of the young people. The inspection explored the management of this complaint and found that the issue had been appropriately dealt with. However, managers accept there is some value in the entire staff group completing training focussed on equality and diversity, particularly as it relates to gay and lesbian issues. The complainant was satisfied with the suggested course of action.

Young people interviewed as a feature of the inspection took the opportunity to express some dissatisfaction with the home's provision of food. Both managers and young people indicate it would prove useful to dedicate one of the home's weekly residents' meeting to focus solely on meal planning and food shopping to help resolve issues.

The provider demonstrates a commitment to continue to improve service provision. This inspection notes that good progress has been made to enhance the quality of care which acts to impact positively on outcomes for young people.

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 are equipped with the skills required to met the needs of young people. In particular, that staff receive equality and diversity training that is focussed on gay and lesbian issues (NMS 18.1)
- to ensure young people exercise choice in the food that they eat and are able to prepare their own meals and snacks, within the limits that a reasonable parent would set.(NMS 2.4)

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*.