

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	30/01/2013
Inspector	Thomas Webber
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	16/10/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is one of two run by a limited company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to a maximum of four young people, who may have emotional and 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 **inadequate progress**.

The overall rating for this home was judged as adequate at the last full inspection in October 2012, although the outcomes and the quality of care provided to young people were rated as good. The day-to-day management arrangements for the home were deemed to be insufficiently effective as it was being remotely managed from the organisation's headquarters. However, steps have been taken to appoint a new manager who commenced work at the home during October 2012. However, no application to be registered with Ofsted has been made.

Three requirements were made at the last inspection. A requirement relating to the administration of medication has been complied with. In addition, staff recruitment is now safer as the home is obtaining a full employment history. However, shortfalls in this area persist because references obtained are not being verified with the referees.

Although staff continue to appreciate the support provided, their performance is still not being effectively monitored through the regular process of formal and individual

supervision and annual appraisals. This was a requirement at the last inspection. Within the last three months, staff have only received one formal supervision session. All staff have also still not received their annual appraisal, although this process has recently begun.

The manager continues to ensure that there are sufficient staffing levels day and night to meet young people's individual and collective needs. However, due to some staff changes, the number of core permanent staff has been significantly reduced and bank staff are being used to maintain the appropriate staffing levels. As a result, staff have struggled to consistently and effectively manage young people's challenging behaviour. On a number of occasions staff had to resort to seek the assistance of the local police to regain control of situations. Staff acknowledge that at these times morale was low.

Inconsistencies in relation to young people's care have led to many situations spiralling out of control and staff members have been targeted by young people. This behaviour and other criminal behaviour have led to placement breakdowns. Staff stated that they are now more hopeful that the changed dynamics at the home will lead to more positive behaviour and a reduction in challenging incidents.

Since the last inspection, the number of incidents of young people going missing has increased. Although staff take appropriate action to ensure that young people are returned at the earliest opportunity, the recording system does not show what action is being taken to minimise future incidents. Robust records are also no longer being maintained. Sanctions applied are not always being recorded, including not detailing the exact duration these are imposed and whether or not the action taken has been effective. As a result the sanctions are not being effective as they are not being consistently applied.

Educational placements are now established for all young people which are tailored to meet their individual needs. However, their level of attendance and improvements in progress are no longer being maintained by all young people.

The home has not been effectively managed from July 2012 until the appointment of the new manager in October 2012. However, in spite of this appointment some aspects of the care and outcomes for young people have declined. This is not helped with the lack of clear guidance and the inconsistency of overall care being provided to young people. As a result the home has failed to make adequate progress.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose. (Regulation 17B(3))	08/02/2013
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate supervision and appraisal. (Regulation 27(4)(a))	01/04/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home has a clear written policy on managing behaviour, which includes supporting positive behaviour, de-escalation of conflicts, discipline, control and restraint, that all staff understand and apply at all times. (NMS 3.3)
- ensure that the home considers with the responsible authority what action should be taken to prevent the child going missing in the future. (NMS 5.9)
- ensure children are supported to attend school, colleges or alternative provisions regularly. (NMS 8.3)

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*.