

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Paula Lahey
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	13/06/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This local authority service is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to ten children and young people. The service can provide a home and a short break service for children and young people who may have a physical disability and/or a learning disability.

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 **satisfactory progress**.

At the full inspection in June 2012, the overall effectiveness rating for the service was adequate, with areas for improvement identified. Action has been taken to address the five requirements and four recommendations. However, they are not all fully met. As such, practice has not been wholly embedded to ascertain consistently improved provision and subsequent outcomes for children.

The provision has continued to have absence among the staff team. Support ratios have been maintained and direct care of children is not affected. However, this has resulted in managers being unable to effect timely change in all identified areas for improvement. Those areas not fully addressed are repeated and in addition, further areas to improve the quality of provision are raised.

Requirements and recommendations that are complete include improvements to restraint and incident recording systems, ensuring that the physical environment is not used to restrict a child's liberty and that agency staff files contain the required

information. All these areas ensure improved protection for children accessing the service. An improvement to recording staff training has provided managers with clear information about requirements for mandatory updates. Food hygiene instruction has been sourced and the majority of staff have successfully completed the required training.

The Registered Manager has provided Ofsted with a detailed Regulation 34 quality monitoring report. In addition, the responsible individual has undertaken a comprehensive review of the current provision and development of the service. Aims for improvement have been identified and a date set for managers to prioritise the actions and devise a plan of implementation.

Staff have been provided with revised guidance relating to leading a shift effectively. Additionally, managers are now required to have oversight of daily shift plans in order to approve staffing levels and delegation. In practice, staff demonstrated an improved understanding of their responsibilities and accountability when leading and/or working on a shift. However, this improvement requires further development to ensure it is consistently embedded throughout the provision. Senior managers have identified this as an area that they will continue to address as part of their internal service review.

The management of medication checking has been revised and the overall system remains under review. New documentation has been produced which reduces the time it takes for medication to be checked in and audited. During the holiday period, arrival and departure times of children have been staggered thereby enabling more effective delegation of staff during key times. Staff have been provided with direction regarding ensuring medication management does not affect children's activity time. This was observed to be successfully implemented during the inspection.

The service has identified those children requiring a behaviour support plan and obtained copies of plans devised by children's schools. This has ensured that staff have improved direction for managing children's challenging behaviour consistently. As a result, incidents for one child in particular have significantly reduced in recent months. A recommendation has been made to ensure that the support plans are personalised to this setting, as they currently direct management of behaviour in the school or the classroom and this could lead to confusion.

Managers have attempted to obtain direction from placing authorities regarding clear and measurable aims for each child's placement. However, managers report a poor response and this information remains incomplete for a number of children. In cases where this information has been provided, the home has been more effective at devising systems to record children's progress towards meeting their aims. This has been particularly evident for a child who has been supported to develop their independence skills. However, a workable system for recording all children's progress has yet to be implemented.

While the Registered Manager has started to consult with children, their families and placing authorities regarding their views on the quality of care, he has not developed

a system to record and evidence this. The newly amended Regulation 34 summary report includes areas to document children's views, but currently this has not been utilised to best effect.

Immediate action is taken by the service to respond to allegations or suspicions that children may be at risk of harm. Statutory safeguarding policies are followed and actions implemented to ensure the safety of children. However, a delay in completing an internal investigation has not been effectively challenged to ensure a prompt and timely outcome for all parties.

Improvements have been made to provide the children with a more child friendly and accessible environment. This has included redecoration of communal areas, putting up photographs of children and improved allocation of spaces. The newly appointed activity room now provides children with another purposeful space in which to play and where they have ready access to a wide range of toys, games and resources. While these items have always been available, they were previously stored in a number of rooms requiring children to refer to staff to access them.

Some parts of the home require further review to ensure that the child friendly atmosphere is continued throughout. For example; the placing of signs and notices to direct staff in their work detracts from a homely environment and some bedrooms appear a little stark. Staff have ideas about how they could personalise children's rooms to make them more welcoming.

An area identified by the Registered Manager for review relates to ensuring that all risk assessments have sufficient detail. In addition, this inspection has recommended a risk assessment is carried out to determine the safety of a particular child regarding bedroom windows.

Staff remain committed to children. They are nurturing and kind their approach and as a result, sound relationships are formed whereby children feel safe and cared for. Children enjoy visiting the service and appear relaxed and comfortable in their environment. Children have very much enjoyed recent activities, such as going to the cinema, watching a pantomime, visiting Father Christmas and having fun parties.

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
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system that shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. This refers specifically to	01/03/2013

	ensuring documentary evidence is maintained of formal consultation with all parties and actions taken in response. (Regulation 34(3))	
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that risk assessments of the whole children's environment are carried out, to identify any potential sources of harm to the children. This refers specifically to reviewing the windows in children's bedrooms and ensuring all risk assessments are sufficiently detailed (NMS 10.8)
- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. This refers to moving signage that is designed to direct staff rather than young people and provide more personalisation in young people's bedrooms (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that investigations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly, quickly and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation (NMS 20.8)
- ensure that children's records contribute fully to an understanding of the child's life. This relates specifically to ensuring that individual care plans document personalised behaviour support plans, details measurable outcomes and comprehensively records children's progress. (NMS 22)

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*.