

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC032069
Inspection date	22/02/2012
Inspector	Sharon Treadwell
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	12/10/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 children's home is operated by an independent provider. The provider organisation is a registered charity and is a major provider of services for adults and children with learning disabilities and mental health issues.

This home provides respite care for more than 40 children and young people with learning and physical difficulties, and often complex health care needs, accommodating a maximum of four at any one time. The children and young people are aged between six and 19 years.

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 in October 2011, the overall quality rating for the service was outstanding. However the home has been without a Registered Manager since June 2008. The current manager has been in post since November 2008, initially in an acting capacity. He was confirmed in post in June 2010, when he had completed leadership and management training. The manager submitted an application for registration with Ofsted, in response to a requirement made during inspection, in August 2011. At the time of the key inspection, in October 2011, Ofsted was in receipt of this application and no shortfall was highlighted. However, the application was incomplete and was returned to the applicant. The completion of the registration process has not subsequently been actively pursued by the manager. This leaves the home in contravention of the regulatory requirement to have a Registered Manager,

and this has been the position for almost four years. This is the reason for the judgement of inadequate progress.

Two recommendations were made at the full inspection. One has been fully implemented and work is ongoing on implementing the other. The provider organisation has amended the application form, utilised for staff recruitment. The form now requires applicants to provide the day, month and year when detailing the dates of their previous employment, which highlights any potential gaps in employment so these can be properly followed up at interview. This will better ensure that all staff employed are safe to work with young people.

At the time of the key inspection the recording pro-forma, utilised for independent visits to the home under Regulation 33, focused too highly on gathering statistical data. There was insufficient reflection, in the reports, of the views of staff, children, young people and their families being utilised to enable the independent visitor to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. Reports submitted since the key inspection, although using the same pro-forma, have incorporated better reflection of service user views and observation of their care experiences at the home. The manager has been involved, with his Assistant Director, in reviewing the pro-forma utilised for recording these visits and a more appropriate record has been developed and is ready for implementation. Although the new pro-forma is not yet in use, a copy was available for inspection. The new pro-forma better highlights the requirement for the visitor to speak with children, young people, their families and the staff to form an opinion of the quality of service provision.

The manager completes monthly management reports, in line with regulatory requirement, to demonstrate appropriate monitoring of the service. Currently, although discussion with the manager highlights that he is using this monitoring to identify concerns about specific incidents, monitor patterns and trends and develop staff practice, his reports do not demonstrate this. The manager is regularly observing staff practice to promote consistency of approach and to identify improvements in practice, which will ensure progressive improvements in delivery of service to children, young people and their families. The written, monthly reports, however, very much constitute an audit of records rather than evidencing this quality assurance practice.

The home continues to work co-operatively with children and young people's families, and with associated health and learning disability professionals, to provide children and young people with a holistic service, which promotes the achievement of very positive outcomes in all areas, supports them to develop to their optimum potential, and encourages a real enjoyment of life experiences. Additional work, undertaken by the staff as part of the home's outreach service, is supporting and extending children and young people's positive experiences within the respite scheme. The manager and staff feel that the provision of care is more consistent for children and young people because they strive to ensure that the staff providing outreach care to the children and young people are on duty when those children and young people stay at the home for respite. This promotes the development of positive relationships between staff, children and young people. In arranging respite

care, the manager has good awareness of friendship groups and great efforts are made to ensure that the grouping of children and young people reflects this. This enables children and young people to make and sustain friendships with others who enjoy similar activities.

Staff say that the organisation and provision of training has improved significantly since October. Partnership working arrangements with a local college, and the implementation of learning sessions facilitated by team leaders, have promoted more timely completion of the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction programme. Earlier registration is also supporting more timely completion of the Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma. Staff receive excellent training input from health professionals to equip them to manage children and young people's complex health care needs. This ensures that all staff are receiving timely and appropriate training to fully equip them to meet the very individual and specialist needs of children and young people in placement.

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
7 (2001)	ensure that the person appointed to manage the home is presented for registration with Ofsted. (Regulation 7(1(a))	01/03/2012

Recommendations

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

- review the recording of the manager's monitoring of the home to reflect the identification of concerns regarding practice, to identify any patterns or trends and to reflect an overview of the quality of service provided within the home. (NMS 21.2)

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)*.