

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC033326
Inspection date	04/02/2014
Inspector	Stella Henderson
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	02/07/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is owned and operated by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for six young people who experience behavioural and emotional 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 home received a full inspection in July 2013 where the overall effectiveness judgement was found to be adequate. However the home has made inadequate progress since then. Requirements and recommendations are set to address the deficits in procedure and practice and improve outcomes and the quality of care for young people.

A number of new concerns have emerged at this inspection. The manager cannot demonstrate that the home makes a difference for all young people. Indeed he concedes that some young people have made no progress at all since the last inspection.

Poor practice in a number of areas has a direct negative impact on the quality of care, safety and outcomes experienced by young people. For example, there is a lack of rigorous care planning. Care and placement plans are not consistently provided and decisions about permanence are unclear. This places young people in a position of uncertainty and staff unable to fully meet their needs.

Young people drift towards independence without the benefit of an assessment to inform structured pathway planning. Some young people do not have a pathway plan, despite being on the verge of leaving the home. As a result young people are, and feel, ill-equipped to make a successful transition from care.

Staff are suitably qualified and experienced. However some staff lack competence in providing simple good parenting. This includes the neglect of basic duties such as getting young people up on time for important appointments and seeking practical help on managing some difficult health issues. Not enough effort is made to get individual young people out of bed, where they then remain until late in the afternoon. Staff are not pro-active in trying to find out where young people are when they leave the home without permission.

The manager has struggled to overcome the resistance of some staff to improve their way of working and fulfil the requirements of their role. As a result the home is unable to deliver a service which fully meets the needs of young people.

The manager has effected some positive change in the home since the last inspection. The quality of recording and documentation has improved and there have been some staff changes. There are fewer incidents in the home which now has a calmer atmosphere.

Some young people enjoy better access to activities and begin to improve their self-esteem. In some cases unauthorised absences and offending behaviour has decreased. However some young people do not feel their lives have improved, although they say that they do feel safe at the home. Bullying is promptly responded to, but the manager has failed to notify Ofsted of an event related to a bullying incident.

The home is in a better state of repair and looks more welcoming and homely. Locks have been replaced on bedroom doors which protects young people's right to privacy and safety. Their views are beginning to be reflected more in the manager's monitoring of the home. These recommendations are largely met.

A recommendation to support young people to attend school, college or alternative provision is not met. Although some young people maintain their school placements, none achieve full attendance. Staff support is not effective enough to help others consistently engage with college or alternative provision. This limits young people's opportunity to fulfil their educational potential and prepare for the world of work.

Some work has been undertaken to ensure that young people communicate their views on their care and support. However some young people do not have care, placement or pathway plans. This denies them the chance to contribute to decisions being made about them. These are recommendations that have not been met.

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
11 (2001)	promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there and for the care, education, supervision, support and, where appropriate treatment of children accommodated there (Regulation 11)(1)(a)(b)	12/03/2014
18 (2001)	promote the educational achievement of children accommodated in a children's home, in particular by ensuring that the routine of the home is organised so as to further children's participation in education, including regular attendance at school and participation in school activities of children of compulsory school age, regular attendance at college where applicable (Regulation 18)(1)(b)	12/03/2014
18 (2001)	ensure that where any child in a children's home has attained the age where he is no longer required to receive compulsory full-time education, the registered person shall assist with the making of, and give effect to, the arrangements made for his education, training and employment (Regulation 18)(3)	12/03/2014
25 (2001)	ensure that there is at all times, having regard to safeguard and promote the health and welfare of the children accommodated at the home a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the children's home (Regulation 25)(1)(b)	12/03/2014
30 (2001)	ensure that if, in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Regulation 30)(1)	12/03/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the care plan is prepared before C is first placed by the responsible authority or, if it is not practicable to do so, within ten working days of the start of the first placement (Regulation 4)(2) (The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review)

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- ensure that, where it is not possible to draw up a placement plan in advance of the placement, a placement plan is made within five working days of the start of the placement (Regulation 9)(2) (The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review)
 - ensure that if C is an eligible child, the responsible authority must (a) assess C's needs in accordance with regulation 42, and (b) prepare C's pathway plan, in accordance with regulation 43 (Regulation 41) (The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review)
 - strengthen arrangements to ensure the home is managed ethically, effectively and efficiently, delivering a service which meets the needs of its users. (NMS 21)

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*.