

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC034922
Inspection date	12/02/2014
Inspector	Jacqueline Malcolm
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	09/10/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The children's home is run by a local authority. It is registered to accommodate up to four young people of either gender who have experienced 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 **good progress**.

The home was last inspected in October 2013. It received an overall effectiveness judgement of good. Three requirements and two recommendations made have been addressed. As a result, the improvements made by the home enables the regulator, Ofsted to monitor how well the home enhances young people's outcomes and protects their safety and welfare. For example, formal systems are now in place to ensure that reports following Regulation 33 monitoring visits are sent to Ofsted in a timely manner. In addition, all significant events are routinely notified to Ofsted.

The fire doors, which were regularly wedged open, have been replaced by an electronic device, which is attached to the fire alarm system, closing on the activation of the fire alarm. This promotes a safer home environment and provides everyone with improved physical safety.

Physical restraint is not the preferred option used by the home to manage any challenging behaviours and the current group of young people do not require this form of intervention. However, the Registered Manager is highly confident that should any young people require restraint agreed techniques would be used. All of

these improvements contribute to the good progress made by the home and shows that they take appropriate action to address shortfalls.

Since the last inspection, some young people have successfully moved on into independence or alternative placements. For some young people who have lived at the home for a sustained period, their milestones are celebrated. This recognises young people's progress in the home. Despite the changes in the group dynamics due to new placements, young people are protected by strong team stability, consistent boundaries and clear routines. This provides young people with a stable home life, delivered by a staff team that role model good parents. Young people have a strong and secure base in which they can understand their histories and move on with their future plans. Although not all young people like the boundaries in the home, they understand the reasons and in the main, adhere to them. This motivates young people's progress and keeps them safe.

Young people are well supported to attend their school and college placements, so that they achieve the best possible educational outcomes. Good relationships between the home and educational establishments help to maintain placements through the high and low points. Proactive steps are taken to ensure that young people who are new to the home and are without an educational placement are found a suitable one. This promotes young people's education and prepares them for the world of further study or employment.

Young people enjoy positive and meaningful relationships with most staff. This promotes mutual respect and trust, providing young people with responsible adults that they can rely on. Young people generally relate well to each other, with the exception of some reports of bullying behaviour. This behaviour is deemed to be unacceptable by the staff team and has been addressed in young people's meetings and with individual young people. Overall, good behaviour is actively encouraged and young people can effectively regulate their own behaviours. This results in few incidents of challenging behaviour or the need to resort to measures of control. However, the implementation of supervised spends on a few occasions to help some young people reduce their substance misuse has not been formally recorded as a sanction in the appropriate document. Although there is no negative impact on young people's outcomes, the absence of the full details does not enable the Registered Manager to effectively review individual young people's behaviour and monitor emerging trends.

Young people benefit from an extremely alert staff team who are responsive to their vulnerabilities and take required measures to keep them safe. This protects young people from risky situations specifically in the community. Missing incidents are effectively responded to in line with the missing from care policies and protocols. This ensures that young people return home safe and well in the shortest amount of time. However, minor recording issues in some of these documents mean that not all of the records are as clear as they could be. The Registered Manager has resolved to improve this, in order to ensure clarity of information. This demonstrates their commitment to learn from shortfalls and improve practice. The development of return home interviews, conducted by an external organisation acts as an additional

safeguard for young people who go missing. Staff talk to young people about their risky behaviours and in more concerning situations, written agreements are developed in consultation with young people. This ensures their protection from child sexual exploitation and other serious risks to their health and personal safety. Good inter agency work between the home, police and other safeguarding professionals continues to minimise opportunities for young people to associate with inappropriate adults.

Young people live within a relaxed and nurturing home environment. Since the last inspection, parts of the home have been refurbished, in consultation with staff and young people. This includes new carpets in the hallway and stairs and the redecoration of the hallway and refurbishment of the multi purpose rooms that young people use to play games and dine together. This makes for a homely place for young people to live.

Staff continue to be well supported by a motivated manager who leads by example and he is committed to effective team work to improve outcomes for young people. Good quality support and development opportunities ensure that the staff team can competently meet young people's diverse needs. Staff are valued, which motivates them and promotes positive team morale. This benefits young people who are well cared for by a caring, stable and resilient staff team who place the young people's needs at the centre of their practice.

Overall, young people present as happy and settled. One young person gave the home a '9 out of 10' for the quality of care. Parents comment positively about their children's progress as a result of living at the home. Typical comments include: 'the staff are really nice with him. He likes the staff and has a really good relationship with them. As a parent I am happy he is happy' and 'my daughter had two keyworkers who were both excellent and I cannot thank them enough for all their nurturing and support they have given her...the staff really care and our experience has all been very positive...I really cannot thank Furness Road enough'. This stimulates good partnership work with parents, which promotes consistent practice that improve outcomes for young people over time.

The two areas identified at this inspection for improvement relate to missing from home and sanction records.

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 entries in records are clear, accurate and legible. This specifically relates to missing from care records (NMS 22.4)
- ensure that if the home resorts to any measure of control or discipline or restraint, this is carefully recorded with full details by the staff involved with 24

hours in a record kept for this purpose (Statutory Guidance, Volume 5, Paragraph 2.91)

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*.