

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	14/11/2012
Inspector	Robert Curr
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	14/08/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is operated by the local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to five young people with 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 **satisfactory progress**.

This home was judged as inadequate at the last full inspection. At that inspection, requirements were raised around: appointing a new manager, staff training and safeguarding, fire safety in bedrooms and record keeping in relation to behaviour management and young people missing from home. Significant progress has been made to address the majority of the requirements and recommendations, where they have not been met, they have been repeated to ensure action plans are followed through to completion.

The home has maintained quality of care and outcomes for young people. A manager has been appointed, however at the time of the inspection, Ofsted had not received an application to register this person.

There are good arrangements to help staff safeguard young people and this includes child protection training and an introduction to the local authority designated officer and their role. Staff said, 'We have found this invaluable in understanding our role within safeguarding.' Revised procedures in relation to safeguarding young people

from abuse or neglect are understood by staff and this enhances current protocols around peer abuse and police involvement

Safeguarding is further improved because there is now an up-to-date protocol to promote the safety and welfare of young people who go missing from care. Staff demonstrate their awareness of the recording procedure.

Recording systems for sanctions have been improved albeit there has only been one incidence since the last inspection. However, during discussion with various staff members, it is clear that they lack clarity in relation to what range of sanctions are permissible or agreed within the home. This does not ensure that sanctions and rewards are fully understood and fairly applied at all times.

The home's fire risk assessment has been revised. Young people are included in the regular fire safety checks and are involved in regular fire drills to ensure that they know what to do in the event of a fire at the home. There are also clear risk assessments in place to identify how risks arising from smoking in bedrooms can be minimised. This enhances the safety of young people and visitors to the home.

Team meetings are now structured to include opportunities for staff to discuss behaviour management and share best practice. Staff receive on-going supervision support.

The majority of staff have received further training to develop their learning and practice. Particularly in relation to child sexual exploitation and responding to allegations or disclosures of abuse. However, not all staff have completed this training. Staff have a greater understanding of the pathway planning process and so can better assist young people prepare to leave care. Currently staff and young people are contributing effectively to pathway plans and said 'We are enjoying working alongside pathway workers in implementing their plans.'

The manager has a satisfactory system to monitor the administration systems of the home. He also regularly monitors all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Although Regulation 33 visits help to drive forward improvement they do not sufficiently provide an overview of the standard of care provided in the home. There is no evidence that young people or their parents are regularly consulted as part of these visits; therefore these reports do not contain their views. It is not clear whether young people can actively contribute about the quality of their care during independent visits. This does not enable managers to routinely make good use of the findings to inform service development and improve outcomes for young people. On occasions, the reports following these visits have not been submitted within the timescale stipulated by Ofsted

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
33 (2001)	interview with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home, as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home and supply a copy of the report to HMCI within stipulated timescales. (Regulation 33 (4)(a) and (5)(a))	30/11/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and young people (NMS 3.8)
- ensure that all staff receive in-service training to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional developments, in particular, safeguarding. (NMS 18.1)

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)*.