

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC034953
Inspection date	19/03/2012
Inspector	Stella Lovie
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	06/07/2011
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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)*.

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is operated by the local authority and provides care and accommodation for up to five young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home supports young people to learn the skills required and develop the emotional resilience needed for transition to independent living and adult life.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **inadequate** progress.

The home was judged to be good at the full inspection in July 2011. There were two requirements made, neither of which have been met at the point of this interim inspection. There were two recommendations made, both of which have been met.

Young people continue to play an active role in their care and in the running of the home. This reflects the ethos of the service which is to support young people into independent living. Young people are learning a range of new skills, such as realistic budgeting and taking driving lessons. This is clearly helping to develop their confidence to move forward into adult life. As one relative comments: '(name) has definitely made progress in the last three months - more mature and less angry. The home has managed to get (name) to go to college and handle money.'

Young people are mostly successfully involved in a variety of educational programmes. Some young people are achieving significant academic success from their starting points. However, despite staff encouragement, some young people struggle to maintain motivation to attend college or work placements, with consequent likely negative impact on their future employment opportunities.

The home operates a positive behaviour management policy which remains successful in completely eradicating the need for restraint. Young people are encouraged through restorative justice practices to take responsibility for their actions. However, in recent months, some situations with young people have escalated to the point of needing to call the police to the home. These incidents have not been the subject of formal notification to placing authorities and to Ofsted, as legally required.

Staff continue to use the prohibited measure of withholding young people's pocket money as a measure of control. It is evident from the young people's comments in the sanctions records that this approach is also not effective in promoting positive behaviour management.

The home continues to operate a good policy for dealing with young people who go

missing which helps to ensure the safety of young people as far as possible. However, the recording of incidents of absence without authority does not provide sufficient detail about the circumstances and reasons for the young person going missing. This means that trends and patterns for individual young people are not being established and proactive intervention is compromised.

Young people have established good links with the local community through attendance at activities, such as sports clubs and faith centres. Most of the young people have friends in the local area and are able to enjoy overnight stays with them. This helps to promote their confidence and self-esteem.

Young people continue to be encouraged to express their views and interpreters are used, as required, when English is not their first language. During the interim inspection, some young people voiced a range of concerns about their perception of staff inconsistency of practice, unfairness and lack of support. Young people said that they feel safe in the home and there is no bullying, but they do not have an overall positive view about the quality of the care that they receive.

This feedback from young people appears to be directly linked to a decline in the standards of care attributable to inadequate temporary management arrangements in the prolonged absence of a Registered Manager. The post is currently being covered by job sharing between two assistant managers who continue to have their primary roles, and also to work shifts. As a consequence, the home lacks sustained and effective leadership which impacts adversely on the quality of care provided.

The home is failing to benefit from reliable quality assurance arrangements as the reports from Regulation 33 visits are frequently missing, and are not being sent through to Ofsted, as required. Similarly, the acting managers are not undertaking monitoring under Regulation 34, so there is insufficient managerial oversight of the standards of care.

While some improvements have been made since the last inspection to the recording of supervision, it is clear from the supervision matrix that some staff have not been receiving regular supervision. This means that their professional development and practice is not being properly managed and adequately monitored. This, in turn, impacts negatively on the care provided to young people.

The home also lacks an annual development plan which suggests that there is no effective strategic forward planning for this service. However, the Statement of Purpose and the children's guide have been updated and provide clear information about the aims and objectives of the home.

Overall, there is a decline in the quality of care and the home has failed to address the statutory requirements identified in the full inspection. As a result, the home is making inadequate progress.

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 registered provider shall appoint an individual to manage the children's home (Regulation 7 (1))	18/06/2012
17 (2001)	ensure that the imposition of any financial penalty is not used as a disciplinary measure, with particular regard to delaying pocket money (Regulation 17 (2) (g))	16/04/2012
30 (2001)	ensure that if 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))	16/04/2012
33 (2001)	ensure that the person carrying out the visit shall prepare a written report on the conduct of the home, and the registered provider shall supply a copy of the report to the HMCI and to the Registered Manager of the children's home (Regulation 33 (4) (c) (5) (a) (b))	21/05/2012
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall establish and maintain a system for monitoring matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals, and for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. The registered person shall supply to the HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted by him for the purposes of paragraph (1) (Regulation 34 (1) (a) (b) (2))	21/05/2012
38 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall give notice in writing to the HMCI as soon as it is practicable to do so if a person other than the registered person carries on or manages the children's home. (Regulation 38 (a))	16/04/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that written records kept by the home when a child goes missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the home and any action taken in light of these reasons (NMS 5.10)
- ensure that the registered person has a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home (NMS 15.2)
- ensure that staff are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified

and experienced staff. (NMS 19.4)