

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	31/10/2012
Inspector	Jacqueline Malcolm
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	30/05/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The children's home is owned and operated by a local authority. It is registered to offer a short breaks service to children and young people. Young people using the service have learning disabilities and many also have physical disabilities.

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 May 2012, the overall judgement was adequate. Inadequate progress has been made since this time because the local authority has failed to address one or more requirements within the appropriate timescales. Outcomes for children and young people are undermined when requirements intended to drive improvement are not promptly addressed.

Since the last inspection the Registered Manager has unexpectedly left the home and a new manager has recently taken up post. The unforeseen departure of the Registered Manager adversely affected staff morale and they have been supported through this unsettled period by a range of professionals. The team remain passionate about the children and young person they care for and place their needs first, so that the impact of the change in management on children and young people has been minimal.

Plans are in place to integrate the home with other children's services to improve outcomes by providing more resources to develop services received by children and

young people and encourage their participation. The new manager is well supported by senior managers, who provide good guidance and mentoring. He has a reflective management and leadership style that promotes staff empowerment and accountability. Staff speak positively about the manager and they appreciate his 'open door' policy. Staff are committed to improving outcomes for children and young people and are familiar with the whistleblowing policy.

New staff say they feel supported and well guided by the manager and staff team. However, they are not effectively inducted and trained so that they can promptly attend to children and young people's needs without supervision. The arrangements for planning children and young people's activities when they stay in the home are under review. This is with the aim of ensuring children and young people positively engage in well thought out activities that they enjoy.

Following the previous inspection five months ago, six of the nine requirements are met. The home is in breach of three regulations. This indicates that improvements to the operation of the home are not implemented sufficiently quickly to demonstrate effective leadership and management. Improvements relate to implementing short-break plans and risk assessments for all children and young people; preparing and implementing the procedure to follow in the event of young people going missing from the home; notifying Ofsted of significant events; updating records and ensuring that they reflect young people's needs in relation to their cultural background and personal identity. The Statement of Purpose is currently under review. Requirements raised again relate to ensuring that staff comply with robust and safe medication practices. Other requirements relate to the monitoring of care practices. This is with respect to consulting stakeholders and relatives about the quality of care and evaluating how their views develop services for children and young people.

Children and young people benefit from comprehensive short-break plans and risk assessments that are now in operation. This ensures that their needs are met and risk managed. The children and young people's plans are agreed by parents and social workers, which promotes transparent practice. Information relating to children and young people's racial origin and religious persuasion is included in their files, which means that issues relating to their individual identity is recognised, promoted and supported. A missing from home procedure has been developed. It is intended to operate in conjunction with the joint police protocol. The document has recently been reviewed and there is an agreement that the police will respond immediately to any children or young people missing from the home. These measures promote children's and young people's safety and welfare.

Significant events involving children and young people and subsequent outcomes are notified to Ofsted. This helps Ofsted to fulfil its regulatory duty to monitor how well the home promotes children and young people's safety.

Concerns raised about medicine administration practices have led to staff capability procedures being followed; but issues still remain with respect to medication practices. Not all staff are following the new draft medication policy and improved monitoring systems that have been developed. In one example, a controlled

medication had been signed out of the home when it had not been collected by a parent so was still in the home's possession. There is no direct impact on the safety and welfare of children and young people; however, this is poor practice that has gone undetected at the home and makes the monitoring of medication practice insufficiently robust. The manager is investigating this matter.

Monitoring systems in the home are improving but consultation with stakeholders is not fully developed. A consistent Regulation 33 monitoring visitor and elected councillor are now identified, providing a good overview of practices in the home and a familiar face for children and young people who meet them. They have recently completed a visit to the home on behalf of the provider. However, consultations with parents or relatives during these visits do not provide a clear evaluation of the quality of service. Regulation 34 monitoring systems provide for consultation with parents and carers, but not placing social workers. The manager is addressing this issue so that the views of stakeholders as well as relatives are taken into account and can inform the development and improvement of services delivered to children and young people.

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
34 (2001)	ensure the system for monitoring and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home provides for consultation specifically with placing social workers and also use the evidence from consultation with parents to improve the quality of care in the home (Regulation 34(1)(b)(3))	30/12/2012
33 (2001)	ensure robust monitoring of all care practices within the home to improve the quality of care; specifically demonstrate how parents and relatives views are used to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home (Regulation 33(4)(a))	30/12/2012
21 (2001)	ensure suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safe keeping, safe administration of any medication received in the children's home. (Regulation 21(1))	16/12/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a good quality learning and development programme which staff

and volunteers are supported to undertake, in particular provide prompt induction and training for new staff to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the home. (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)*.