

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	07/02/2012
Inspector	Stephen Smith
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	03/11/2011
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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

The children's home provides short-break care and accommodation for up to six young people. The home is run by a local authority and is registered to care for young people with learning disabilities.

Progress

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

At the last inspection in November 2011 the home's overall effectiveness was judged to be good.

There were four statutory requirements and six recommendations made at the last inspection. The home has addressed all the requirements and has fully addressed five of the recommendations. It has partially addressed the sixth recommendation.

It was required that the monitoring by the registered provider and the manager included consultation with children's parents and families and their placing authority in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. The home has fully revised the recording forms used for this purpose and this consultation does now take place. It was recommended that external monthly visits check and evaluate records of any incidents of children missing from the home and how well the home manages children's behaviour and promotes their ability to enjoy and achieve. It was also recommended that copies of monitoring reports undertaken under Regulation 34 are sent to Ofsted. Both these recommendations have been acted on. This means that monitoring of the quality of care provided by the home is more robust.

A recommendation was made that the home undertake any actions identified as being required by the external monitoring visits. This related specifically to a situation in which falling leaves prevented children's access to the use of some outdoor play equipment. The manager and staff have given this situation close consideration and a resolution is now in hand.

At the last inspection it was required that records of any incidents of physical intervention contained a clear description of the nature of the intervention rather than being based on the technical name of the hold. The home has added additional guidance to its recording books to ensure that descriptions are now written in straightforward language. This will improve the ability to monitor the appropriateness and safety of any interventions used. There have been no recorded instances of physical intervention since the last inspection.

A statutory requirement was also made regarding the recruitment checks undertaken on new staff members. The home now ensures that applicants' full employment

histories are checked and any gaps and the reasons for leaving positions with children or vulnerable adults are verified and explored. This means that the home is now more assured about the suitability of applicants than it was previously.

It was recommended that children's files contained written consent from a person with parental responsibility for them which allowed staff to administer first aid to the child if necessary. This consent is now sought and clearly recorded on children's files.

Two recommendations were made regarding the children's guide to the home. It was recommended that information about how to contact the Children's Rights Director was added to the guide and also that a guide using suitable alternative methods of communication should be developed for the children who may need this. The home has added information to the guide about how to contact the Children's Rights Director. This will help children to raise any concerns they may have about the home. The home is working to fully redevelop its children's guides. It has produced a draft version of a guide for children with more pronounced communication difficulties and is working to complete this. However, this guide is not yet complete so the recommendation made at the last inspection is repeated here.

The home works consistently to continue to improve its service provision. Managers and staff are reflective in their practice, evaluate the home's work and make any improvements necessary. Children and their parents are very pleased with the care and service provided.

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, where a child requires it, the children's guide is available when appropriate through suitable alternative methods of communication such as pictures. (NMS 13.6)