

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	17/02/2014
Inspector	Denise Jolly
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	10/07/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care and accommodation for up to three young people of either gender on a medium- to long-term basis. The home is run by a local authority that provides services to support young people with emotional and behavioural problems.

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**.

At the last full inspection, the home was judged as outstanding. The home has made satisfactory progress overall, and continues to be led well by a qualified and experienced Registered Manager. However, recent transition of young people in and out of placement has impacted on the stability of the home, and it is going through a period of some disruption. Nevertheless, the settled staff team is working very hard to restore the smooth running of the home, and to gain the confidence of all young people who live there.

Managers monitoring shows that the steps towards progress young people take are the result of the continued efforts of staff. They help them to identify the risks and limitations their behaviour imposes on their future prospects. As a result, all young people have an identified education placement and are committed to engage with it. Staff work with schools and young people, to overcome barriers to achievement, such as lack of academic success, or temporary suspension. By working with specialist professionals such as education psychologists, young people can identify strategies to help them to make positive change in their lives. Staff support them

further by encouragement and interest in their learning.

The qualified and experienced Registered Manager promotes effective placement planning and review for young people. Care planning for young people is of high quality, and reflects their needs and wishes. However, young people do not always have appropriate placing authority plans in place. For example, a record of a care plan review meeting is missing, and there is insufficient review and evaluation of risk assessments, or the impact of the behaviour of some young people. Although staff discuss young people in detail during staff meetings and handovers, they do not formally evaluate all risk management strategies for effectiveness. This means staff do not ensure the consistency of approach that maximises young people's opportunities to make and sustain progress.

Nevertheless, staff strive to help young people to make safe and positive choices about their lives. Through planned sessions, calm and proportionate behaviour management and more informal interactions, staff present young people with many opportunities to learn about the impact of their relationships and choices on their welfare and safety. As a result, episodes of young people being missing have reduced significantly. When necessary, the home works with the police to find and return young people to the home safe and well, and take action against those who harbour them.

Staff work tirelessly to support young people, and parents and professionals value this. They say that staff provide care and nurture, and understand the needs of the young people placed in the home. In praise of staff, one parent said, 'They take the time to help my child understand how to connect the boxes between what they do and the consequences, and this has helped him to improve.'

Despite repeated damage to the fabric of the home by some young people, staff organise repairs, and maintain a tidy, safe and comfortable environment. Each young person enjoys a bedroom that is personalised to their taste, and staff help them to keep it clean and tidy. Staff organise a varied programme of activities for young people, and encourage them to find a balance between spending time with their friends, and pursuing activities that will help their independence such as cooking and shopping. Staff encourage young people to participate in sport, such as joining a football team, to improve their fitness.

Health professionals say the home supports young people to achieve the goals in their healthcare plans, and this includes learning about the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse. When young people misuse drugs, staff offer individual sessions with young people, to help them to think about the risks involved. Young people improve their capacity to work with other professionals who help them, due to the support and encouragement of staff. They make good progress, for example, in attending meetings with youth offending services, and this helps them to make informed choices about their future involvement in criminal or antisocial behaviour.

The Registered Manager uses internal and external reports on the conduct of the home, to review and enhance the development plan. Monitoring of the home

includes the views of young people and other stakeholders. This ensures the service remains relevant and helpful to those who live in it.

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
28 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated a record in permanent form which includes the documents and records specified in schedule 3, specifically the result of any review of the placing authority's plan of care for the child. (Regulation 28 (1a), Schedule 3 (19))	28/03/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that records are clear and up to date, specifically with regard to children's risk assessments and management strategies, including any evaluation of their effectiveness. (NMS 22)

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*.