

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Emeline Evans
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	13/06/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is run and managed by the local authority. The home offers care and accommodation for up to eight young people of either gender who have emotional and, or behavioural issues.

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 **good progress**.

At the last inspection in June 2012, the overall effectiveness rating for the home was judged to be good. There were two requirements and four recommendations made. This children's home demonstrates continued improvement in the quality of care provided with a clear and focused commitment to service development. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the relationships that exist between staff and young people. The staff are clearly very passionate about promoting good outcomes for young people and work as a team to ensure this is achieved.

The manager has complied with the requirement made at the last inspection for the Statement of Purpose to be revised and this now includes details of the organisational structure, staff team and arrangements for training and supervision of staff. In addition, the home has revised the children's guide and this now includes information on how the young people can contact the Children's Rights Director, and the age of young people admitted to the home. This document ensures young people receive a vast amount of information, and allows them to have an understanding of what care is provided by the home.

Since the last inspection, there has been a high amount of risk taking behaviours recorded: in particular, young people going missing from care. All that is possible is done, in line with each young person's protocol and risk assessments, to locate him or her and bring about a safe return to the home. There is effective liaison with families and the police, and staff look at minimising the risk of recurrence. The manager and staff team evaluate this behaviour to examine trends or issues, and this enables staff to reflect and learn to inform future practice. Young people's safety is given high priority and this includes effective working with external professionals. The manager has developed links with the youth service and sexual health professionals who have attended staff meetings. This practice is equipping staff to be able to give the young people sound support and advice.

Within the home the young people are encouraged to develop and acquire life skills that will help them move into adulthood. For example, young people take personal responsibility for keeping their rooms tidy and for helping with their laundry. Since the last inspection, the staff team have developed an incentive scheme to encourage young people to further develop their life skills. The home has an independence flat to enable young people to take on additional responsibilities such as in the preparation of meals and snacks. Staff are in the process of implementing individual independence programmes for young people. However, these plans are currently not in operation and it is therefore difficult to fully evaluate success in this area.

The home was asked to improve the recording of any sanction in the home. The recording now includes the views of the young people. This is a sound system, which staff are aware of and enables effective monitoring to take place.

On the last inspection, a recommendation was made in relation to having the minutes from statutory looked after children reviews on young people's files. These are now in place and this ensures staff have access to records that outline case decision-making. However, it was not clear if the management team have contacted the placing authority to request statutory reviews when they are overdue. Young people regularly meet with staff for link work sessions with a designated member of staff. However, documentation of these sessions is still not sufficiently detailed therefore this recommendation is re-stated.

Young people continue to receive well-planned care provided by a committed and competent staff team. Staff provide clear boundaries within a caring environment. Young people have a positive view of the care that they receive and say their relationships with staff are good. Young people spoken to confirm that they feel safe and that they feel they would be able to talk to staff if they were worried or anxious. In recent months the staff team has experienced an increase in challenging behaviour exhibited by the young people and they have worked together to support each other and the young people. Currently, a copy of the Children's Home's Regulations and most recent national minimum standards are not readily available to staff in the home. The absence of these documents does not allow staff to keep up to date with current legislation and enable them to fully focus on further improving the quality of care provided.

Since the last inspection, much work has been done to evaluate the current level of service, to progress service development plans and to plan ahead for future areas of development for the coming year. Effective monitoring systems review the quality of care that young people receive and identify areas where outcomes for young people may be improved. The Registered Manager now formally reviews the quality of record keeping on a regular basis which results in awareness of key issues and any patterns or trends are identified. This ensures any shortfalls in the quality of care are identified and promptly addressed. There is a commitment to providing a high quality service. All staff are vigorously working towards further improving outcomes.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home has a programme in place for promoting the young people's independence and moves to adulthood and leaving care (NMS.12)
- ensure a copy of the Children's Homes Regulations and the National Minimum Standards are available permanently to staff (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 3.15)
- ensure that information about young people, in particular records of link work sessions, is recorded clearly and in a way that is helpful to young people when they access their files (NMS 22.5)
- ensure the home contacts placing authorities to request statutory reviews if overdue for any child. (NMS 25.5)

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*.