

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	05/03/2012
Inspector	Angus Mackay
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	29/09/2011
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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 is a six-bedded home which is owned and managed by a local authority. The service is registered for no more than five children. The home may accommodate children with emotional and /or behavioural difficulties.

Children have access to play and art therapy which occur off site. Children attend school but can be educated within the home which has a space dedicated for use as a classroom or for homework.

Progress

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

The inspection judgement remained outstanding at the last full inspection on 29 September 2011, with one recommendation being set. The home has made excellent progress in addressing the previous recommendation. This is providing young people with good involvement in care and education planning, as well as enhanced understanding of these plans. Young people were able to clearly explain their individual plans, and how staff incorporate their views into them, in a meaningful way. Young people work closely with their keyworkers to provide comments for their care and education plans on all key areas of their development. Staff record views and comments from young people verbatim on a structured form. Young people say their views are fully considered in planning future interventions and changing things like contact arrangements.

Young people say they enjoy being in the home and have good relationships with each other and with the staff. Young people's awards, trophies and certificates festoon the walls of the building, celebrating and encouraging their achievements. Staff encourage young people to use their leisure time positively, including an agreed constructive time for reading, discussion or educational games. Young people say that they use this constructive time to do homework or some other positive activity. During the inspection this included some young people working diligently with the local youth justice team. Young people say that they see the place very much as their home and have friends to visit or even sleep over. Young people engage in the local community in a range of positive ways including sporting or youth clubs and fund raising events. Young people use their weekly meeting and keywork sessions to influence the running of the home. A recent example of this was young people requesting a review of bedtimes, which resulted in an adjustment to make them more age-appropriate.

Staff have experienced a change in the function of the home which, allied to a departmental review of residential homes, had caused some anxiety. The responsible individual and line manager of the home were meeting with staff during the

inspection to answer questions arising from this. Staff confirmed they had provided a clear outline of the strategic direction of the service in this meeting. External managers say that the pace of change is dictated by the needs of the current young people. Staff expressed positive views about the home and the management of the changing function. Staff describe managers in the home as accessible, friendly and involved in all aspects of the home. Staff appreciate the Registered Manager's carefully-monitored devolution of responsibilities, which they say engages them in the running of the home. The Registered Manager is encouraging the development of leadership skills in senior staff and the empowerment of all staff to improve the service for young people. The manager is enabling this by training, positive modelling, and properly devolving responsibilities to staff. Young people benefit from this through staff's improved confidence and better decision making, providing more consistency for them. The manager makes excellent use of management information gained from both her own monitoring of the service and external monitoring reports. The manager supplies her review of this information to Ofsted and is using it to advise the home's development plan and improve outcomes for young people. The external visitors produce helpful reports, incorporating young people's feedback from visits which occur most months. Monitoring visits must occur each month to provide an appropriate safeguard for young people. The responsible individual explained changes that he has implemented to the monitoring process to enhance the quality of this monitoring and to meet the requirement.

The home has made significant changes to the computer access provided to staff and young people. Staff are responsible for monitoring internet access to ensure that young people are kept safe and do not misuse this access. Internal and external managers have taken a considered approach to implementing changes to the home's purpose. This has effectively engaged the staff team and kept young people aware of planned changes. As part of the preparation for change, staff have made changes to the recording of accidents and incidents, giving more detailed information on situations where abuse or threatening behaviour is involved. This change enables clearer analysis of events, ultimately improving interactions with young people. The manager has held meetings with external agencies, including the police and sister homes, to establish appropriate thresholds for interventions in these situations. Managers have provided appropriate training in restorative justice, enhanced safeguarding appropriate to the changing age range of the young people, and in managing risks of these young people going missing. This has included forming links with other agencies and learning from other homes with relevant experience. Staff say this is reassuring as well as contributing to preparing them to provide an appropriate service to older adolescents. Staff are using the restorative justice approach in their working with young people and in applying sanctions or interventions. Young people benefit from improved outcomes and innovative approaches to their behaviour management. Examples include showing young people risks in a controlled way and adjusting sanctions, in consultation with young people, to make these more effective.

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
33 (2001)	ensure that visits in accordance with this regulation occur at least once a month and that a written report on the conduct of the home is sent to the HMCI at least once a month (Regulation 33(1-5))	30/04/2012

Recommendations

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