

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	07/11/2012
Inspector	Elizabeth Barrett
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Date of last inspection	11/07/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately owned home offers services for up to four children and young people, with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

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 July 2012, the overall quality rating for the service was judged as adequate with four requirements and five recommendations for improvement. The Registered Manager was asked to make improvements in the recording of restraints and complaints, to update the Statement of Purpose and to ensure that copies of the up-to-date local authority placement plan and the home's own placement plan are in place for each young person.

The previous inspection also recommended that improvements be made in relation to obtaining young people's views and involving them in the formulation of their care plans, behaviour management plans and risk assessments. Other improvements required related to the recording of sanctions, training of staff in safeguarding practices and the monitoring of the home's practices. Progress since the last inspection is good.

The service demonstrates its capacity to improve because it has met all of the requirements and the majority of the recommendations set. The home's management team has introduced a robust system for the recording of physical restraints which clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of the restraint, the methods

of de-escalation used and that de-briefs with young people take place.

As a result of improvements made to the service's complaints procedure, a thorough investigation process is now in place with clear and detailed records being kept of any complaint and of their outcomes. The service has revised the Statement of Purpose which includes all matters compliant with regulations, and contains up-to-date information on the staffing arrangements of the home. The Statement of Purpose now more accurately describes the practices of the home.

Issues around the availability of local authority care plans are addressed and all young people have current plans in place. The home is working closely with young people to implement a new individual placement plan for the home. Young people's views are being taken into account on the format and design for these.

Staff are now better equipped to deal with any safeguarding concerns. They have received safeguarding training, including how to respond to allegations or suspicions of concern in relation to a child. Additional training is scheduled to take place with the local authority safeguarding board. The service provider has invested considerably in staff training and development, and this is evidenced through discussion with staff.

All young people have current individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans in place. Support is now provided for staff through the availability of therapeutic services. This service provides advice to staff on individual behavioural needs, and through the provision of attachment training and one-to-one sessions with young people. Further staff development sessions are planned to inform them how to address behaviour management and sanctions through restorative approaches.

Improvements have been made to the monitoring processes of the home. Internal processes are routinely undertaken by the manager in line with Regulation 34. The associated records show the areas that were monitored and set actions for improvement. A new system for the external monitoring of the home demonstrates a clear and evaluative process is now in place, which includes regular consultation with young people and staff. Visitor reports provide information on shortfalls, and include areas for consideration whereby managers can effectively address any on-going issues.

This inspection found that young people make good progress to develop a positive self-image and have a knowledge and understanding of their background and plans for their future arrangements. Young people achieve positive outcomes in relation to their educational attendance and attainment and in self-regulating and managing their own behaviours. Staff are positive in their approach to young people's education and see learning as an integral part of life at the home. Young people are set boundaries and know what is expected of them. As a result, they are beginning to expand their own life skills and achieve emotional stability. Young people express confidence in the safety and security of the home, with one young person commenting, 'I am happy and feel safe living in this home.'

Relationships between managers, staff, and young people are mostly warm, caring, and respectful. The recruitment of new staff to this service has enabled a full complement of suitably competent staff to be in place and bring a period of stability to the home. The home's management team are working with this new and developing team to ensure they all clearly understand their roles and the expectations placed upon them. However, some young people express concerns that staff are not always consistent in their care and engagement with them. This means that on these occasions, staff are not always there for them on an individual basis. Young people also say that they would like staff to spend quality time with them and to engage in different activities in the home and out in the community.

Senior staff keep up-to-date with practice developments and share these with staff which improves the quality of service. The Registered Manager, who is also a director for this company, is committed to building on the improvements made since the last inspection. The home is currently managed on a day-to-day basis by an acting manager who is in the process of being considered for the Registered Manager's position at this service. This development is intended to provide a clear separation of roles and responsibilities and to enable the director to concentrate on the continuous improvement of the company.

The management team for this home demonstrate a commitment to providing a high quality service and to improving outcomes for all young people. However, they recognise that there are some shortfalls in the consistency of staff practices and that, as an evolving team, more training is required to ensure that all staff work together in the best interests of all young people.

There are two recommendations set at this visit in relation to promoting positive relationships and leisure activities.

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 all staff understand, share and implement the home's ethos, philosophy and approach to caring for children, particularly in relation to building positive relationships with all young people in their care (NMS 3.4)
- ensure that children develop their emotional, intellectual, social creative and physical skills through the accessible and stimulating environment created by the home. This includes taking part in individual activities with staff in and outside of the home (NMS 7.1)

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)*.