

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	16/02/2012
Inspector	Stephen Trainor
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	15/05/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

A private organisation operates this children's home. It is registered to care for up to three young people, of both genders, from the age of 10 to 17 years. The home cares for young people with emotional and 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 **satisfactory** progress.

At the last full inspection, the home was judged as satisfactory. The children's home has demonstrated continued improvement in the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people.

The responsible organisation made a number of changes to the home's operation between inspections. A new manager was appointed. Registration is still to be completed with Ofsted. The new manager is fully qualified and has lengthy experience of working in residential settings. Young people benefit from consistent practice that allows their lives to improve. Placements are stable and young people take responsibility for their behaviour.

A new staff team was established between inspections. Young people receive a good standard of care from a qualified, experienced and competent staff team. Training and staff personal development is coordinated well at this home. However, staff do not yet have a comprehensive understanding of new inspection framework, evaluation schedule and grade descriptors. Relationships between young people and

staff are good and fewer behaviour management concerns have been highlighted between inspections. When concerns arise they are responded to in full and accurate recordings are made.

Protocols have been agreed with local police and Ofsted. A new operations manager was appointed by the responsible organisation to drive forward improvements. The post has had a positive impact on raising standards, achieving consistency through day-to-day routines and implementing young people's individual programmes. Communication and actions taken in response to any identified community concerns is also a lot clearer and an immediate response is made when issues arise.

Young people have successfully accessed educational resources open to them from within the surrounding community. The young people actively engage with their education programmes and their attendance is satisfactory. There is ongoing liaison with schools and colleges to further improve attendance. Young people's achievements improve self-confidence and future prospects. One young person had been successful in securing a place with The Prince's Trust. Young people regularly reflect on their progress with staff and this keeps them motivated. Pathway planning is in place for older residents and these provide opportunities and experiences that enable young people to gain new skills for the world of work and for the time that they leave the home. Formal plans are being finalised through statutory reviews.

There is good use of a range of monitoring activities and evaluation of data helps to improve the quality of care. Planning is founded on evidence that tackles key areas of weakness and builds on areas of strength. The new manager is reviewing the home's development plan to ensure it supports her ideas and the direction of travel she wishes to follow. Some good ideas were expressed. The home's aims and objectives are being fulfilled. The responsible individual and the operations manager provide a clear role in supporting the home's improvement agenda.

Records provide a good overview of the work that is taking place at the home. Programmes run by key workers positively change young people's behaviours. Individual key worker sessions following incidents, provide good support and guidance that helps keep young people safe. The young people's views are consistently gathered and these influence the home's operation and future direction. Individuals confirm that they are happy, safe and relaxed living in their home. There is a limited body of written evidence to show the views of others on the home's operation and management. The home's management recognise that more feedback could be gained by applying different consultation techniques. The views of independent reviewing officers are not being captured.

Good information, including policy and procedural guidance, is available to support staff's practice. The office space is a little on the small side but is managed well to allow important information, records and data to be kept safe. Changes made to the home's staffing structure had been captured within the home's records. Personnel records showing how recruitment and vetting checks are carried out show robust procedures are being followed. The inspection confirmed that no staff start work ahead of being in receipt of an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check.

Notifications made to Ofsted between inspections were closely scrutinised. The responsible organisation has a policy to report all incidents and matters affecting the home's operation and management. Some of the issues being reported are not necessarily required by Ofsted. However, it is clear that logging and reporting matters in this way is helping both police and Ofsted to monitor the service. The quality of information provided is good and this helps to evaluate practice, check safeguarding arrangements and review the home's operation. On some occasions outcome statements, once investigations had been completed, are not being made clear.

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 new manager completes the registration process with Ofsted (NMS 14.1)
- ensure a written record is kept which includes full details of the action taken, and the outcome of any action or investigation, following a notifiable event (NMS 24.2)
- ensure all staff's work is consistent with new regulations, new national minimum standards and the available guidance; specifically, show that staff have a comprehensive awareness of the evaluation schedule and grade descriptors (NMS 21.3)
- ensure the views of independent reviewing officers are sought regularly. (NMS 1.4)

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)*.