

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Joanna Heller
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	12/07/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately run home provides accommodation and care for up to six young people with learning disabilities. The service provides both long term and short break placements.

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 previous inspection in July, the home was judged as good and four requirements and two recommendations were made. The manager has addressed the requirements; however one new requirement and four new recommendations have been made following this inspection.

The requirements at the last inspection related to fire prevention arrangements, record keeping and quality assurance mechanisms. Since the last inspection the fire risk assessment has been reviewed and new fire doors and automatic closures have been installed. The manager is continuing to monitor the need for any further doors to be fitted with magnetic closures. This has the effect of significantly improving the fire precautionary arrangements in the home. The home now ensures that each young person has an individual emergency evacuation plan in place to guide staff in the individual emergency evacuation process for that child. However, it is not clear if all night staff have undertaken a fire evacuation practice within the past year.

Staff are clear that restraint is used only to safeguard young people or staff. Staff are

trained in restraint and use mostly guiding techniques to remove young people to safer surroundings. The recording of these 'low level' restraints has improved since the last inspection. There are no records maintained of how staff ascertain young people's thoughts and feelings following each restraint and there is limited evidence of the manager reviewing either individual incidents of restraint, or any emerging patterns and trends.

Since the last inspection the manager has developed a quality assurance system to monitor quality of care in the home. The manager is further reviewing how this system can be improved, such as collating effectively the views of key stakeholders. Such information would enable a more effective full review of the service and assist in identifying both the services strengths and areas for growth.

The home now holds a clear admission and discharge register, this means that it is easily possible to identify which young people are staying at the home on any given day. Staffing rotas are now clear and maintain an accurate record of staff on site. Pictorial duty rotas help young people understand who is on duty. Staffing levels are high with young people receiving one-to-one support during the day. This means that individualised care is more easily provided and staff are able to respond flexibly to young people's needs.

Quality of care in the home remains strong. All the young people are thriving and benefit from highly personalised care. Young people have care needs on the autistic spectrum and staff ensure that routines are maintained. This enables young people feel more comfortable within their environment and minimises anxiety and distress. Staff are aware that changes to these routines, such as school holidays, are things which may trigger certain behaviours for some young people.

Young people have limited communication and staff focus on developing this area. For example, staff are each equipped with a key ring of symbol cards which young people use in their daily lives. This is reinforced throughout the home with pictorial daily activity plans and menus, and symbols on cupboards. These help young people be more involved in making choices throughout their day.

Young people experience growth in areas such as personal care skills, independence skills and behaviour. They engage in daily personal cleanliness routines and become interested in their personal appearance. Young people who, on admission, refused to travel unless in a car, now use public transport daily, accompanied by staff. Consistent boundaries enable young people to gain some understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and have resulted in a reduction in challenging behaviour for some.

Young people would be highly vulnerable if leaving the home unaccompanied by staff. Appropriate security arrangements and high staffing levels in the home prevent young people from going missing. However, there is no written agreement with parents and the placing authority about the use of the security chain and thumb lock on the front door.

Young people are healthy and are all in appropriate educational placements. Admissions into the home are planned and young people benefit from a gradual introduction process. The provision of some day care and short breaks mean that young people are welcomed into a home with which they are fully familiar, minimising their anxiety. The provision of short breaks is to a very small group of young people which means that young people do not have unfamiliar people staying in their home. Young people over the age of 18 are well supported in moving onto appropriate adult services. The organisation is opening a registered home for adults where some young people plan to move shortly. Young people have been actively involved in the transition arrangements, including regular visits, choosing their rooms and meeting other prospective residents. Some key staff will also work at the new home for a time, enabling a smooth transition and minimising distress for young people. In the interim, some young people have remained beyond the age of 18 and staff now formally review any risk this may pose to other young people.

The building is spacious and meets young people's individual needs. A good mix of private and communal space is provided, enabling young people to always be able to seek either company or private space. However, the interior of the building is showing signs of wear and tear and the decor in a number of areas is not age-appropriate for the young people accommodated. For example, Thomas the Tank engine paintings and aeroplane boarders.

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
17B (2001)	keep under review and where appropriate revise the behaviour management policy. In particular; evidence that each and every restraint is subject to monitoring and management review in a timely manner (regulation (17(B) (2) (a))	01/03/2013
32 (2001)	ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that the persons working at the home and, so far as practicable, children accommodated there, are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire Regulation 32 (1)(e).	01/03/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that where any sanction, disciplinary measure or restraint is used, young

people are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- review the practice of locking the front door and establish whether this is the most suitable means to safeguard children and promote their welfare and development. Ensure such measures are only used where agreed with the responsible authority and parents. ensure such restrictions for one child do not impose similar restrictions on other children. (NMS 10.4)

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*.