

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC064472
Inspection date	15/01/2014
Inspector	Jim Palmer
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	31/10/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is owned by a private organisation and is registered to provide care for up to four young women with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

The home operates a smallholding with vegetable and fruit gardens. A number of animals are kept, including horses, chickens, ducks, pigs, sheep, and various small companion animals, including house cats.

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 full inspection carried out in October 2013, the overall quality of the service was judged as good, each outcome area was also judged as good. No statutory requirements were made as a result of that inspection. Two good practice recommendations were made. Since that inspection the home has taken effective measures to meet the two recommendations made. At this inspection, the home was found to be making very good progress and no statutory requirements or recommendations were made.

The service was asked to review the effectiveness of the safeguarding training provided to staff in order to ensure that they fully understood and were confident about their roles and responsibilities should they have any child protection concerns. Since that inspection the home has reviewed the training and provided all staff with refresher training. Staff knowledge is now regularly tested following training, in team meetings and by visits to the home under Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes

Regulations. As a result all staff spoken with during this inspection were very confident of the action they would take in the event of a concern. No child protection referrals have been made since the last inspection, however all staff were aware of the contact details they would need to use. As a result the safety of children living in the home is further promoted.

The home was also asked to ensure that any restrictions on young people's access to communication, specifically mobiles telephones is only made to promote the safety of young people. The home has reviewed young people's access to mobile telephones, particularly the times that young people may have access to their personal telephones. Most young people have their own mobile telephone, subject to individual risk assessment. Where any restriction in the interest of the promotion of safety is required, it is detailed in the placement plan and agreed with all parties with parental responsibility. It is then subject to regular review.

Young people confirm that they were consulted and now have wider access to their telephones, which they welcome. For any young people who do not have access to a mobile telephone a pay phone is made available within the home.

Young people benefit from continuing to enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff which enable them to explore sensitive issues openly with staff. As a result they develop life and social skills which enhance their self-esteem and confidence. Young people report that they feel safe and benefit from living in the home, this is confirmed by family members and placing social workers. This is strength of the service.

Consultation with young people remains good, and they continue to be fully involved in the day to day running of the home and in planning for their futures. Since the last review the home has improved its programme for the preparation of young people for living independently by introducing a 16 plus workbook. Some young people were starting work on this project during the course of this inspection. They say that they are supported and encouraged in developing skills at a level and pace they are comfortable with.

Young people's health needs continue to be well met and monitored. Staff are pro-active in promoting young people's good health and the service liaises closely with health professionals ensuring that services such as child and adolescent mental health services are accessible to young people.

Contact between home and school is good and most young people make good steady progress in school. Some young people progress to attend local college courses.

There is a wide range of social and leisure activities that young people are encouraged to participate in, including community based activities such as St John ambulance service or army cadets, which develop community and social responsibility. Some young people benefit from the experience of caring for the many animals living in the garden attached to the home, such as horses, ponies, and pigs.

The home continues to provide a warm comfortable and relaxed environment in which young people thrive. It is very well decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard. Young people are understandably proud of their home.

The manager and senior managers have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and monitoring of the service is strong. There is a service improvement plan in place which staff and young people can contribute to. The home is currently introducing new systems for measuring and reporting on outcome achievements for young people. The manager and staff remain committed to improving outcomes for young people.

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*.