

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	20/12/2012
Inspector	Paul Scott
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	25/04/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is one of a number of children's homes operated by a private company. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two 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**.

This interim inspection focused on the progress made by the home since the last full inspection in May 2012, at which the judgement for overall effectiveness was outstanding. The home is judged to making adequate progress. This is because while young people continue to receive a good standard of care, with plenty of opportunities to fulfil their potential, they achieve mixed outcomes. When young people choose to work with staff their efforts are rewarded in the good progress they make. This includes improved contact with their families, developing their skills and talents through activities and learning to be more independent in preparation for adult life.

The circumstances of the home have changed since the last inspection. Changes to the staff team have resulted in a reduction in the number of qualified and experienced staff working at the home. The manager and remaining staff have worked exceptionally hard to ensure these changes have not impacted negatively on the quality of care for young people. Managers effectively support staff and continue to channel their efforts into delivering a strong, child-focused service that is

conducive to young people developing to their potential. A small number of staff have been recruited and further recruitment is on-going. All staff are appropriately vetted to ensure they have the right skills and attributes to work with vulnerable young people.

Staff continue to diligently plan young people's care; adapting plans when necessary to ensure young people's individual needs can be met. Young people's views are integral to care planning and the day-to-day running of the home. For example, rules and sanctions are routinely discussed and agreed with young people, who sign behaviour contracts as an indication of their agreement and understanding. However, in an attempt to manage bedtimes it has become routine practice to turn off the electricity supply to the sockets in young people's bedrooms. This is not a reasonable approach to helping young people settle at bed-time and does not encourage them to take responsibility for their behaviour.

A number of complaints have been raised by young people, mainly relating to each other. Staff always listen to young people. All expressed concerns are taken seriously and responded to in full. For example, when young people continually expressed dissatisfaction about living with each other, and all attempts to mediate failed, decisive action was taken to facilitate a placement move, in the best interest of all young people.

Robust safeguarding procedures and care practices safeguard and promote young people's welfare. There has been a recent increase in challenging and aggressive behaviour towards staff. The home responded appropriately by increasing the number of staff working on each shift. Good links have been established with the local police. This ensures a safe and proportionate response is taken to managing young people's challenging and aggressive behaviour without the need for restraint or criminalising without good reason.

The manager effectively runs the home to ensure young people live in a safe place. Procedures for reviewing the quality of care have been improved significantly. This ensures monitoring of the home is evaluative and information is used effectively to secure future improvement and development. The home is well maintained and is furnished and decorated to a good standard. However, staff do not have access to the main heating controls and cannot always regulate the temperature in the home. This appears to be a financial decision taken by the organisation but it is not conducive to ensuring young people live in suitable and comfortable environment.

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
11 (2001)	ensure the children's home is conducted so as to make proper provision for the care of children accommodated there, in particular, that staff have access to heating controls and can regulate the temperature of the home at all times. (Regulation 11 (1)(b))	08/01/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure children are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour and that methods of behaviour management do not lead to institutionalised practice, in particular, review the practice of cutting off the electricity supply to children's bedrooms at night. (NMS 3.6)

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*.