

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Debbie Foster
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Date of last inspection	21/09/2011
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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)*.

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care, accommodation and education for up to 26 boys and girls aged from 8 years up to 17 years old. The home offers a specialised service to children and young people with autism.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **satisfactory** progress.

At the last inspection in September 2011, the overall judgement for the effectiveness of the home was good. A number of young people continue to make progress in reducing anxiety levels which relate to their autism, in positive behaviour and increasing their independence skills, which assists in enhancing their daily life experiences. Some young people are accessing the wider community more, while others have enjoyed going on holiday. A young person said, 'I get on with the staff that look after me' and 'I am learning to cook.'

The requirement and some of recommendations made at the last inspection have been met. All areas within the home are clean and in good structural repair internally and externally. A number of improvements to each flat have been made, including decoration, new furnishings and a number of repairs. There has been further personalisation of lounges, bedrooms and corridor areas. As a result, this has enhanced the environment for young people, providing them with a comfortable home to live in. However, since the last inspection deficiencies have been noted in a number of floor covering around the home, some carpets are marked and stained.

Staff are receiving training to equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the young people, in particular, conditions relating to young people with learning disabilities, for example epilepsy and sexuality of young people with autism. The home has a development plan that identifies and incorporates the planned changes in the operation and resources of the service for the coming 12 months. This will assist in bringing improvement to the quality of care and outcomes for young people. Young people's placement plans are being monitored by designated staff to ensure all the requirements of the plan are implemented in line with their day-to-day care and that the individual's progress is clearly established.

Four recommendations from the last inspection have not yet been implemented in full. The home involves young people in making choices in their daily lives including meals and activities. However, there are still shortfalls and the staff are still seeking further ways to and build on establishing the views, wishes and feelings of young people to influence the care they receive. This would bring greater autonomy for young people.

The complaints procedure is not in varied and suitable formats to meet the individual needs of all young people; this does not enable them to actively complain or raise concerns about their care through a formal procedure that they can understand and use, if required.

Although, a number of staff hold a level 3 qualification and all new staff are to commence the level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma, not all staff have yet achieved this qualification to meet the recommended target of 100%. This qualification will support professional training for staff and equip them to meet the needs of young people.

Changes have started to be implemented to the format and content of young people's case files to make sure information is easily retrievable and to assist the staff further in providing consistent care to young people and in the monitoring of individual progress. However, this work is not yet complete.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- build on and seeking further the views, wishes and feelings of young people to influence the day to day running of the home and on the care they receive (NMS 1.1 and 25.2)
- ensure that young people know how their concerns will be dealt with and acted upon; in particular that the complaints procedure is in a format which will facilitate their understanding (NMS 1.1)
- ensure that there is a clear written policy that clarifies the purpose, format and content of information to be kept on the child's file. There is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed; in particular making sure that information is easily retrievable. (NMS 22.1)
- ensure all exiting staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification. All new staff engaged from the commencement of the NMS in April 2011 are to hold the level 3 Children & Young People's Workforce Diploma which must include mandatory social care units; or be working towards the Diploma within 6 months of confirmation of employment (NMS 18.5)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable environment that is well maintained; in particular that floor coverings are stain free and in good repair. (NMS 10.2)