

Inspection report for children's home

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

Date of last inspection	15/09/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to accommodate and care for no more than three young people. The home provides medium- to long-term residential care to young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Emergency placements can be facilitated dependant on the stability and mix of the young people in residence at the time. Young people are encouraged to maintain education at their school or college but may attend the company school. The home provides young people access to a psychotherapist in a therapy suite. The psychotherapist also provides advice to the staff team.

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.

The inspection judgement was good at the last full inspection on 15 September 2011, with three recommendations being set. The home has successfully addressed all of these recommendations. The home has made excellent progress in improving access to education for young people and in addressing local concerns, related to their operation. Young people say they love the staff and everything about the home, particularly the current manager. Staff are good at involving young people in their care and education planning. Young people talked knowledgeably about their care and education plans and about how they influence these plans. In addition, the current manager has developed a process to allow young people to contribute to staff appraisals enhancing their engagement in the running of the home.

The Registered Manager left two months prior to this inspection and the deputy

manager is performing the role of manager until the replacement manager takes up the position. Suitable arrangements are in place for a permanent appointment, subject to appropriate checks. The young people are very positive about the current manager, saying they really like her and that she is, 'the best manager'. Staff say that the manager has brought stability to the home and is efficient, well organised and helpful. The current management arrangement is ensuring that young people continue to receive good quality care.

The manager's changes to the selection process improve the safeguarding of young people. The manager has improved checks on candidates and recording of decision making, ensuring that new recruits pose no risk to young people. The manager has provided young people with access to a telephone card, which enhances their safety, allowing them to contact people outside the home without recourse to staff. In practice, young people say they just use the office telephone. Staff also assist young people to write to friends and family encouraging them to maintain contacts and develop writing skills. Young people explained how they use the complaints procedure and say that staff take their complaints seriously. The manager has plans to provide formal feedback to young people about grumbles and requests which they raise in their house meeting. Young people say this will be a positive enhancement and will help them know that staff take their requests and grumbles seriously.

The home has responded positively to concerns from local residents about disruption in the street. All young people now leave the home for education in a school established for their use or to attend local school. Young people benefit from improved educational resources and improved local relationships, enhancing their educational opportunities and improving their safety. The manager and company directors have established a local forum, including relevant local agencies, to enhance community involvement and improve local relationships. Young people say they are actively involved in the local community and enjoy good relationships with other children through attendance at sporting and youth clubs.

The manager uses information, gained from her monitoring of the home's activity and from external monitoring, to evaluate the performance of staff and the activity of the young people. The manager uses this information to target interventions, improving staff performance and outcomes for young people. Directors of the business use quarterly summaries of the monitoring information, provided by the manager, to adjust the development plan for the home and enhance the care provided to young people. The manager has not yet sent these summaries to Ofsted. External monitoring reports have noted a minor discrepancy in the recording of homely remedies. The manager is implementing changes, to the recording of medication, to improve the safety of young people.

Young people are very happy in the home and say staff have helped them to improve their behaviour and enhance their safety. For example, there is a dramatic reduction in the number of times young people go absent without permission from the home. The manager has arranged for redecoration of the home and all young people say they are having their rooms exactly how they want them. The manager has implemented changes to the storage of information and organisation of the

office which improve security of information and working conditions. In addition, young people have access to an improved therapy suite within the building which they enjoy attending.

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
7 (2001)	ensure that a Registered Manager is appointed (Regulation 7 (1))	16/03/2012
34 (2001)	ensure the review conducted to monitor the matters set out in Schedule 6 is supplied to HMCI. (Regulation 34 (2))	30/03/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that an evaluation of the monthly monitoring of matters set out in Schedule 6 is sent to HMCI at six monthly intervals (Volume 5, statutory guidance, para.3.14)
- ensure there is a written record of all medication given to children; in particular ensure this is accurately recorded. (NMS 6.15)

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)*.