

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	25/03/2014
Inspector	Mark Ryder
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	04/04/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by the local authority.

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 last inspection, in April 2013, this home had an overall judgement of good with three recommendations. The outcome of this inspection is that all three recommendations have been met.

The staff work closely with a therapeutic support agency that provides guidance and insight into effective strategies in working with young people with complex behaviour and emotional difficulties. The staff are committed to engaging with young people effectively. There are noticeable positive bonds between staff and young people at this home.

Staff provide young people with continuity of care and support. Young people recognise the boundaries that are put in place although do not feel they are always fair. However, staff are consistent with young people and have realistic but appropriate expectations about behaviour. For example, staff will challenge young people for swearing. Recorded sanctions are considered proportionate.

Young people are reluctant to engage in education. The staff encourage young people to attend school and college using incentives although this has limited impact of late. However, the staff promote education as essential and necessary. There is regular communication between education staff and the home which has provided useful in further developing ways in which to engage young people to learn.

Young people continue to put themselves at risk of potential harm. The Registered Manager and staff work closely with a number of agencies, such as the police and the local authority, to reduce risks taking behaviour. For example, young people who misuse alcohol or drugs have a dedicated support worker from a local agency to work with them. This is having some impact although risks continue to remain high. However, risk assessments are repetitive and do not provide sufficient strategies to inform staff how to reduce risk taking behaviour on a day to day basis. As a result it is unclear what interventions work or are ineffective.

Missing from home incidents have recently increased. Staff work within procedures and protocols with the local police and have good working relationships with them. Multi-agency meetings take place to review such behaviour and strategies are in place to help to reduce or limit the level of risk some young people find themselves in. However, missing logs do not record evaluation as to what action staff have taken in light of a young person missing from the home. Therefore, the records do not provide sufficient information to both inform and evaluate what lessons have been learnt as a consequence of such incidents.

The Statement of Purpose reflects the practice and ethos of the home and now includes all required information. For example, the use of internal electronic surveillance (door alarms) are now included within this document. However, the young person's guide, while written in a child friendly format and is suitable for children to access, does not contain correct information on how to contact Ofsted, the young person's independent reviewing officer or the children's rights director. Therefore, young people may not be able to contact these agencies if they wish to.

The leaders and managers of this home have satisfactory oversight of practice and records. For example, restraint records are regularly reviewed and commented upon by the Registered Manager. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

The home's maintenance programme is sound. There are suitable and timely safety checks completed to electrical installations within this home. This is also an improvement since the last inspection.

As a result of this inspection three recommendations have been raised to improve practice and record keeping.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the guide includes a summary of what the home sets out to do for children, how they can find out their rights, how a child can contact their IRO, the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors, and how to secure access to an independent advocate (NMS 13.5)
- ensure written records kept by the home when a child goes missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the home, and any action taken in the light of those reasons. This information is shared with the responsible authority and where appropriate, their parents (NMS 5.10)
- develop and implement a proportionate approach to any risk assessment. (NMS 4.5)

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*.