

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	24/10/2013
Inspector	Stephen Halliley
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	03/06/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is owned by a large private organisation and provides long-term placements on behalf of local authorities. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who may have 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 home was inspected by Ofsted in June 2013 and judged to be a good service with one requirement being made around the decoration and maintenance of the home.

Since then there has been a very comprehensive redecoration plan put in place. This has resulted in a home that looks clean and tidy, is well furnished and welcoming for young people. This has included complete redecoration of all bedrooms including new carpets and the repainting of the hall and stairs which is very near completion. The lounge has been completely redecorated by staff with the full involvement of young people and will be completed by fitting a new carpet in the near future.

Prior to this inspection information had been received at Ofsted, by way of notifications of significant events and concerns from neighbours and the police, relating to behaviour management in the home. Rotas show staffing levels were appropriate to the number of young people and agency staff were only used as

additional staff where absolutely necessary. However, police were called to the home 15 times between the start of June 2013 and this inspection. While still a considerable number this represents a significant reduction on previous months. Senior managers are clear the home does not call the police regarding matters of damage in the home but only as a last resort when behaviours are unmanageable and young people and staff are deemed to be at risk should this continue. Staff training records show that all staff have been appropriately trained in behaviour management. Incidents which have required police involvement have invariably been when young people have worked together to place themselves or others at risk. This has created a dynamic staff have been unable to effectively challenge within the constructs of their behaviour management techniques. The Registered Manager has previously held a meeting with the police in August 2013 and a further meeting is planned for early November. This will also involve more senior managers within the organisation and members of the Parish Council as the home are clear they need to communicate clearly with the community in which they are based to maintain and improve relationships. The operations manager is clear this will involve giving them sufficient information about the behaviours of young people while retaining their anonymity especially around any offending behaviour.

There has been no police involvement in the home in recent weeks while there has only been one young person living there. Managers are very aware of the triggers to behaviours of current young people and have given a great deal of thought to the placement matching process for proposed new referrals. As a result, a number of potential referrals have been declined while managers look for referrals who will be suitable for the ethos of the home and whose impact risk assessments indicate a minimum of disruption to current residents.

Outcomes for young people have been positive, with young people moving on to therapeutic placements or foster care in order for their changing needs to continue to be fully met. Young people are also increasing their attendance at school, well supported by staff. However, on the day of inspection a young person could not attend school as there was no vehicle available to transport him as the house vehicle was required elsewhere. While strenuous efforts had been made to source alternate transport these had proved unsuccessful.

The frequency of unacceptable behaviour leading to restraints and sanctions has decreased markedly in recent months. Records made of these incidents are clear and generally well completed. However, some records of restraints have been stapled in to the restraint log and cannot be said to be being kept in a format which cannot be tampered with after the event. Additionally there are some omissions in this recording in areas required by the home's policies and procedures. Some sanction records do not indicate the date on which the consequence is to be imposed, especially where this is different to the date of the behaviour for which the consequence was given. Examples of consequences are reparation for damages or loss of the next paid activity which should be recorded clearly so it is well known to staff and the young person when this consequence will begin and when it will be completed.

Young people are clear they are happy and safe in the home and are well aware of protocols in place should they absent themselves without permission. This ensures they are aware of consequences to their behaviour and also that appropriate measures are taken to ensure their safe and prompt return to the home. Young people also benefit from regular, and improving, contact with families to ensure they maintain relationships which are important to them. This is well facilitated and supported by staff.

There is a good deal of positive work being carried out with young people, clear thought is being given to the referral and admission process and there is a clear development plan in place for continued improvement in the service currently offered. Conversely, there have been a significant number of behaviour management issues which, though being addressed, have had an impact on young people's interactions with, and in some cases led to young people receiving cautions from, the police. There are also shortfalls noted in the recording and security of restraint and sanction records. As a result this home is judged to be making satisfactory progress at this time.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which shall include the date, time and location of the use of the measure. (Reg 17B (3) (d))	30/11/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure all records of restraint are in a format which cannot be tampered with after the event (Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations, Volume 5: Children's Homes, paragraph 2.91)
- ensure the homes approach to care minimises the need for police involvement to deal with challenging behaviour and avoids the need for criminalising children unnecessarily (NMS 3.22)
- ensure children are supported to attend school, college or alternative provision regularly (NMS 8.3)

- ensure all staff's work is consistent with regulations, national minimum standards and the home's policies and procedures; specifically completing all areas of restraint recording as required by the organisation. (NMS 21.3)

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*.