

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	21/01/2013
Inspector	Rachel Ruth Britten
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	17/09/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned and the organisation operates other children's homes in the area.

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 full inspection on 17 September 2012 this service was adjudged as 'adequate'. Since then the home has maintained sound quality of care and outcomes for young people. There have been significant improvements in the quality of the environment, so that young people all have suitable furniture for private study and can comfortably dine together with staff.

There have been four departures of young people during the last four months and only one young person remains in placement since the last inspection. Young people have recently been placed on an emergency and/or short term basis and some placements have ended because the home has not been able to reduce young people's risk taking behaviours or adequately safeguard them. Some young people have returned home at parents' request because they have not wanted their child to continue to be 'looked after' by the local authority. Young people have not always been able to live together positively because of the complexity and variety of their needs and this too has resulted in placement changes for some young people. Young people in placement longer term are struggling to commit to their education and are

making only adequate progress in their emotional development, physical health and independence.

Young people receive sound care, the quality of which has begun to improve during recent weeks. There have been a number of new staff and rota changes since the last inspection which are yet to significantly benefit young people. New staff are well guided and motivated by the interim managers in the setting and now work longer shifts, providing more consistency of care to young people. However, there are not presently enough qualified and experienced staff to provide good quality care on every shift without interim managers working shifts. In addition, the recommendation made at the last inspection about improving the recording and celebration of young people's time in placement has not been acted upon and is therefore raised again. Similarly, the recommendation about improving the timeliness and quality of personalised care is only partially met. For example, semi-independence work has started with young people where this is appropriate, and clearer boundaries and consistent application of them has recently assisted young people to better understand what is expected of them. However, young people's plans and targets are out of date and are only now being reviewed and shared with them. This holds back their progress and indicates that the quality of care is only adequate.

Young people benefit from interim managers who have addressed the requirement and four of the seven recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection. The Registered Manager resigned shortly after the inspection and the proposed replacement manager ensured that necessary matters were addressed in the home. This included the appointment of a deputy manager. The proposed manager was also notified to Ofsted and prepared her application for registration whilst continuing in post as manager at another home. The proposed manager and deputy focussed on ensuring that the organisation of the home improved, including the standard of the home's work around the notification of significant events. This improved work has benefitted staff morale and the quality of care in the home. However, during recent weeks, the organisation has been taken over and a policy of 'one manager per home' has been adopted. In the light of this, the deputy manager has been appointed as proposed manager from February 2013. This too has been notified to Ofsted.

The leadership and management of the home remains adequate, despite the changes in home manager. The appointed deputy, who is now the proposed manager, is enthusiastic and committed. He has ensured that all new staff are booked onto core training and is liaising with the new head office about how any specialist training will be accessed in a timely way to ensure that specialised needs of young people are properly met. This meets, so far as is presently relevant, the recommendation that was made at the last inspection about training. The proposed manager has also begun work on more rigorous monitoring activity and linking of this to development planning and targets. However, the work done so far does not clearly identify patterns and trends or reach conclusions about the quality of care and key areas where improvements can be made. There is also a continuing lack of regular and effective consultation with young people and stakeholders. As a result,

the recommendation made about this at the last inspection is also raised again. Nevertheless, the proposed manager has identified weaknesses in admissions impact risk assessments and is giving greater consideration to the appropriate mix of young people in the home. This aims to ensure that risk-taking behaviours are not exacerbated within the group, for example, by young people going missing together.

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 procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home are effective. This includes effective monitoring of the trends, issues and quality of the service. Ensure also that young people and stakeholders are regularly involved in contributing to the monitoring and have their views and any concerns seriously taken into account (NMS 21.1)
- improve the timeliness and effectiveness with which staff record, support and encourage young people to collect memorabilia of their time in placement and make a record of significant life events (NMS 22.6)
- ensure that each child's placement plan is monitored by a key worker who ensures that the requirements of the plan are implemented in the day-to-day care of that child. This pertains particularly to the placement support plans and behaviour support plans being effective through regular update. (NMS 25.2)

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*.