

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	07/02/2012
Inspector	Julian Parker
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	21/10/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a small private children's home catering for one young person aged from 12 to 17 years who may have emotional and/or 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.

The overall effectiveness judgement at the last full inspection was good. The requirement made to ensure the adequacy of staffing at all times by employing sufficient numbers of qualified competent and experienced staff is met. Similarly, the requirement to ensure improvements to the environment, particularly the en-suite bathroom used by children has been attended to.

The quality of the care provided for young people in this single occupancy provision has been maintained. Principally this is because of the persistent, concerted efforts of the staff team to develop meaningful and trusting relationships.

Safeguarding practice is underpinned by rigorous and frequently reviewed risk assessment ensuring the effectiveness of behaviour management measures. The assertion of explicit behaviour management plans and consistent staff practice has resulted in better placement stability. However, resistance by young people to engage meaningfully with these measures impedes any notable improvement in outcomes during the short-term assessment period being provided by this placement. The uninhibited and often unregulated expressions of opinions, wants

and feelings regularly create physical challenges for the staff to manage. The intensity of some behaviour often results in the need for physical intervention, not usually necessary for this age of young person, to reintroduce effective and safe behavioural boundaries.

The continuity of core staffing has helped to ensure that young people can, should they choose to, feel comfortable and secure in their home. The rights and dignity of young people are promoted through formal access to advocates, legal representation, social workers and regular supervised contact with parents. Young people understand how to express any grievance they may have and use the formal complaints process.

Young people remain fully involved in activity planning as a component of their regular formal and informal consultation with staff. Considered risk assessment and increased staffing levels help ensure that all associated risks during off-site activity are well thought out. Comprehensive recording of formal notifications confirms that it is often when off site that significant challenges arise, for example, when trying to engage young people in meaningful and normalising activity, such as attending school or accessing community-based activities. Staff are well trained to exercise physical intervention using an approved methodology when all attempts to diffuse threats and actual aggression fail.

The Statement of Purpose does not fully reflect the measures, or staffing adjustments, that have proven necessary to accommodate the present objectives and resident of the home. The consistency of the home's leadership since the last inspection has been interrupted by the temporary absence of the Registered Manager resulting in some staffing changes. Ongoing practice ensures that the home's focus remains on safeguarding young people, often from their own behaviour. Some outcomes for young people have improved, namely in the reduction in the frequency of notifiable incidents. This has been as a result of strategic risk reduction, for example, by replacing all crockery with plastic-based items to prevent broken sharp-edged objects being used as potential weapons in the home. These stringent measures are discordant with the home's former ethos of nurturing and preparing young people for independence.

The heightened awareness by staff of the overt physical challenges posed by young people has emphasised the need to improve practical health and safety measures within the home. Managing the physical environment, through the deployment of staff and locking of unused areas of the home has helped to keep young people and staff safe. This approach has allowed the care plan objective of conducting an assessment of an individual's future placement needs, away from the influences of resident peers, to be carried out.

Internal and independent monitoring processes reflect the recent turbulent behaviour presented by young people. This has compromised the appearance and ongoing physical maintenance of the home. A development plan is in place outlining objectives for the home during the year. The emphasis on day-to-day safety, largely affected through the need to practice intense behaviour management, has

necessarily refocused plans for the home's ongoing development. In practice this approach has not directly affected the present resident, but potentially rewrites the previous plan for the home's management, continuity and improvement.

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
4 (2001)	provide a copy of the Statement of Purpose to the HMCI that accurately describes the present operation of the home. (Regulation 4(2))	08/03/2012

Recommendations

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

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)*.