

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC374268
Inspection date	09/10/2012
Inspector	Joanne Vyas
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	11/06/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This home offers medium- to long-term care for a maximum of three young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a large national provider of children's residential care.

Specific direct work and individual therapy programmes are provided to young people by a qualified and experienced psychotherapist, employed by the provider organisation, who makes weekly visits to the home. Staff employed at the home are trained in creating a therapeutic environment to support the work of the psychotherapist.

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 **inadequate progress**.

At the previous inspection in June 2012, the overall quality rating for this home was judged as adequate with five requirements and eight recommendations.

The home has a new manager in post since the last inspection who is currently awaiting the completion of registration with Ofsted. Young people enjoy a family-style home where they appear happy and cared for. They have good relationships with staff, which enables them to develop their confidence and self-esteem. All young people are in full-time education. They have regular therapy sessions, which help them to manage their unsociable behaviour and come to terms with their background and placement history.

The manager has made substantial progress towards meeting the requirements and recommendations made at the previous inspection. She was asked to clarify the admissions procedure with regards to emergency admissions and the process for assessing the suitability of a placement. The manager explained that they do not take emergency admissions. She would expect to have comprehensive information about a young person before they were admitted. Furthermore, she said she would look at the impact of the admission on other young people living within the home and the skills of the staff team to ensure they can promote and make proper provision for the welfare of the young people. Staff are either undertaking a qualification in the care of children or completing their induction. This will ensure the promotion of the health and well-being of young people admitted to the home.

Staff are now receiving appropriate training and support to ensure they can effectively address and promote the welfare of young people. Staff, including any agency staff used, have the appropriate training to ensure they can carry out physical intervention correctly and safely. However, physical intervention has considerably reduced since the last inspection. This would suggest that young people are happy and settled in their placement and that staff have the skills to effectively manage situations where young people are agitated or aggressive. Staff said they talk to young people and offer distractions to try to calm them down. Both young people and staff are offered a de-brief session after an incident which provides a time for reflection. This supports staff and young people to understand the reasons for the incident occurring and promote strategies to prevent future incidents.

Young people have a number of opportunities to express their views. They have weekly residents' meetings as well as day-to-day informal conversations with staff. At the previous inspection the manager was also asked to ensure that the views of young people are more explicit within records such as key-working sessions. Records of key-working sessions clearly record the views of young people. Sometimes, the session is initiated by a young person, for example, a young person may talk about a student in their school who is pregnant or wanting to start smoking. These have prompted discussion about sexual health, contraception and health related to smoking. Staff make good use of these impromptu conversations and provide suitable advice and guidance to young people.

The manager was asked to ensure records are maintained in the home for up to 15 years as well as ensure records are up-to-date and accurate. All records relating to children are kept for one year within the home. They are then centrally archived to a secure location within their head office for the required length of time. Furthermore, records are now accurate and kept up-to-date.

During this inspection a number of health and safety issues have been identified that may put both young people and staff at risk of harm. There is an up-to-date fire risk assessment and checks are carried out on fire escape routes weekly. However, the fire risk assessment and the weekly checks have both failed to identify that fire doors downstairs are inadequate because they do not close properly. Furthermore, the kitchen fire door, which leads into a hallway and therefore is a fire exit route, can be

pushed back so that it does not close. This is a fire safety risk and could impede the escape of young people and staff in the event of a fire.

A risk to the security of the property was also identified. A downstairs window does not close properly and could be opened from the outside. While the gate to the garden is locked, a fence panel, which backs onto a main road, has a large hole in it. The fence panel was reported to the home's maintenance department in February 2012. This presents a serious security risk and places young people and staff at risk of harm. The manager immediately called a contractor to make the window secure.

A number of maintenance issues are slow to be completed. For example, a window was reported as broken in February 2012 and has still not been repaired. Furthermore, the window presents a hazard as small shards of glass remain in the frame. The manager immediately called a contractor to order the new glass and board up the window until the glass can be fitted. Some areas are in need of decorating. A rug is curling at the edges and is in an area where people walk through. This may be a trip hazard. Beading and a carpet retainer are missing from the hallway into the lounge doorway. This was also reported in February 2012 to the maintenance department and has not yet been addressed.

The bathroom is also in need of maintenance. The bathroom has black mould growing in the shower cubicle. This can be hazardous to health. The toilet flush has broken and can only be flushed by removing the cistern lid. Condensation is prevalent on the walls and by the toilet. The Regulation 33 visitor, who monitors the running of the home, believes that the wooden floor may be rotting. A young person said that he felt unsafe as he thought the floor may fall on top of him. Although this is probably an unrealistic fear, it clearly was an issue for him. The manager has asked for the bathroom to be refurbished and has contractors coming out to provide quotes for the work.

Young people do not have access to a telephone without reference to persons working in the home. This prevents young people making and receiving calls without the knowledge of staff. Therefore, young people may feel that they are unable to call their social worker, family or people related to safeguarding such as Child Line or Ofsted.

The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of this home. She knows the young people and the staff well. She has a plan to develop the service further. However, as a new manager, she has had an enormous task to address the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection which have been focused on the outcomes for young people. Consequently, outcomes for young people have improved greatly with regards to behaviour management and education. However, the attention to health, safety and maintenance has not been adequately or effectively addressed leaving young people vulnerable to risks from the environment.

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
32 (2001)	ensure, after consultation with the fire and rescue authority, there are adequate means of escape. This specifically refers to the integrity of the fire doors (Regulation 32 (1)(b))	31/10/2012
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are secure from unauthorised access (Regulation 31 (2)(b))	31/10/2012
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are of sound construction and kept in good structural repair externally and internally and are reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31 (2) (d)(e))	30/11/2012
15 (2001)	ensure children accommodated in the home, subject to paragraphs (6) and (8), are provided at all reasonable times with a telephone on which to make and receive calls in private, which they may use without reference to persons working in the home (Regulation 15 (4)(a))	31/10/2012

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)*.