

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	15/02/2012
Inspector	Sharon Treadwell
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	20/09/2011
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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 **good** progress.

At the last full inspection, in September 2011, the overall quality rating for the service was outstanding. Two recommendations were made at that time.

Since the key inspection, the Registered Manager has transferred to another children's home operated by the same provider organisation. The former deputy manager was appointed as acting manager in December 2011. Formal appointment of a permanent manager has not yet been undertaken and this means that the home has no manager registered with Ofsted. This is a regulatory requirement. The former Registered Manager had been in post a long time and his departure unsettled the staff team and the young people. Some young people's behaviours deteriorated, in the short term, with displays of anger and aggression. The acting manager has

displayed robust and consistent leadership and management skills in negotiating her changed role within the home. She has worked slowly and consistently with young people to help them to understand and accept the changes and regain their feeling of stability and security. She has exercised an open and robust leadership approach with the staff, to build their confidence in her management skills and to ensure a continuing consistency of positive and professional input into the care of the young people. This has ensured that the quality of care provided within this home has not been reduced by the absence of a Registered Manager and continues to be of an exceptionally high standard.

The acting manager and staff have continued to develop extremely positive relationships with associated professionals to support them in providing holistic care to two young people in very secure, stable placements. Young people feel happy and settled, and interactions between them and the staff are generally warm, affectionate and mutually respectful. The positive relationships staff have with young people's schools have ensured that young people have maintained full attendance and are now securing some very positive achievements. Young people are strongly supported and encouraged to take part in a wide range of activities. The work undertaken by the home to develop young people's social and interactional skills has opened up opportunities to take part in things like school trips to France and Italy. Young people's mental health and emotional support needs are well provided for through weekly sessions with a qualified psychotherapist and by the therapeutic focus of staff in their care of young people. This has helped young people to come to terms with some of their unhappy life experiences, to understand and manage some of their difficult family relationships and to develop self-confidence and a feeling of self-worth. There are excellent examples of staff advocating for young people, with placing social workers and with independent reviewing officers, to ensure that their safety and well-being are prioritised and that their views are heard. Young people are proud that their home is rated as outstanding.

At the time of the previous inspection, some young people's files did not contain copies of their personal education plans. The acting manager has pursued the provision of these, sometimes with great difficulty, and has clearly recorded her requests for their timely provision. When the home was inspected in September, the staff were not receiving training in relation to facilitating and supporting young people's contact arrangements. The acting manager has been proactive in endeavouring to identify appropriate training, speaking with the local authority and various social work training providers, and has found this difficult. She has worked with her operations manager to develop some comprehensive written guidelines to enable this training to be provided internally. While the training has not yet been delivered, the necessary groundwork has been undertaken and a clear commitment demonstrated to ensuring that staff will receive this training.

Progress since the previous inspection is good. There are thorough and robust systems for monitoring the operation of the home and the quality of care delivered. The acting manager demonstrates good oversight of working practices and has ensured that this home continues to prioritise positive outcomes for all the young people. Young people are happy in placement and are making, and sustaining,

significant progress. Monthly unannounced visits on behalf of the provider organisation provide a very thorough examination of care practice and record-keeping skills. The independent visitor who undertakes these visits notes on his most recent visit: 'This home is very focused on encouraging and supporting young people to think about how their actions will be viewed by others and how the skills they acquire will take them forward into adult life.'

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
7 (2001)	ensure that an application for registration of a manager is submitted to Ofsted. (Regulation 7(1(a)))	01/03/2012

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)*.