

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC374268
Inspection date	18/03/2014
Inspector	Pippa Greed
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	06/06/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2014

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.

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 full inspection in June 2013, the overall effectiveness rating for the service was judged as adequate with one requirement and one recommendation made. The home has fully addressed the requirement and recommendation that were raised at the previous inspection.

The home has maintained outcomes for young people with positive care provided. Since the last inspection, the home experienced a period of instability, which impacted on the young people placed in the home. This was as a result of risk taking behaviour influencing other young people and levels of incidents rose during this period. These included young people going missing from the home. One young person has since moved on when their placement became untenable. Young people are now more settled and missing from care events have reduced.

There is a clear commitment towards service development and young people are supported to engage in education, make choices in their daily lives and choose activities they enjoy. Young people confirm they feel able to talk to their key worker and make decisions. Young people's comments include: 'I like it here.' Young people are supported to negotiate and make sense of the world through regular key working sessions. These include support and advice provided around safe sexual health and smoking cessation delivered in a way that is meaningful to young people. The registered manager and staff team continue to seek the views of young people. Young people are consulted on day-to-day decisions and staff from the home and young people confirmed this.

Young people enjoy a wide range of activities offered. Examples include: making chocolate brownies, playing laser quest, going bowling and visiting theme parks. Through effective relationship with staff based on trust, young people benefit from engaging in learning and having fun. Young people are able to explore forming relationships outside of the home with support and advice from staff. This means young people have the opportunity to explore normal life experiences. Young people have made progress from their starting points through being nurtured and in turn developing a sense of identity and recognising appropriate social boundaries. This approach has enabled young people to try swimming with good outcomes. Young people's engagement in education has improved. The home has recently reviewed with school and placing authority to provide alternative education provision to meet young people's needs more appropriately and to date; this is proving positive through identifying the right environment. In line with their age and abilities, young people are guided to learn independence skills such as planning a menu and choosing meals that are balanced and nutritious. Independent living plans outline targets for skills development and some targets have been attained such as using the bus home from education or planning food shopping. This means young people are encouraged to acquire life skills at a pace they are comfortable with which in turn fosters confidence and self-esteem.

The registered manager monitors the operations of the home through systems of review. These include regulatory six-monthly reports sent to Ofsted and a care plan file monitoring checklist. However, not all changing needs were risk assessed and included within the plan of care. This means recent behaviours were not formally recorded. As a result plans do not provide the staff team with clear written guidance on how best to manage these. These relate to situations where young people do not adhere to agreed return times or acquire mobile phones without agreement from their placing authority. Staff spoken with confirmed they receive formal supervision and regular training. Training records demonstrate effective mandatory training is provided. Staff also receive some additional training relevant to the specific needs of the young people placed in the home and the team is taking proactive measures to access external training in child sexual exploitation.

Young people have the benefit of being cared for by a supportive and committed staff team. The registered manager and staff team provide sound care for young people providing a base in which to help them make progress.

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 home implements a proportionate approach to any risk assessment. This relates to the practice of reviewing young people's changing needs including use of mobile phones and absences without authority (NMS 4.5)
- ensure that the children's home only provides admission to children whose assessed needs they can reasonably expect to meet. This relates to ensuring the mix of children is appropriate and risk assessed (NMS 11.2)
- ensure each child's Placement Plan is monitored by a key worker within the home who ensures that the requirements of the plan are implemented in the day-to-day care of that child. This relates to monitoring and review of the care plan in line with changing needs. (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*.