

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Robin Whistlecraft
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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)*.

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is operated by a private company which has several similar homes in this area of the country. Care and accommodation for up to two young people is provided. The company has its own school for children not attending mainstream education provision, and also offers (if a child wishes) weekly therapy as part of the ongoing care.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **good** progress.

At the last inspection, in early December 2011, the overall quality rating for this home was judged as good, and three recommendations were given for areas identified for improvement. The home has continued to maintain the quality of its service.

The last inspection identified the need for the home to discuss and record young people's views following a sanction or the use of restraint. The home has met this recommendation. The home's records show that young people now see what staff record and occasionally make their own comment. This means that the home is providing an additional opportunity for young people to reflect on their behaviour.

Another recommendation was for the home's managers to look at patterns and trends in the home's records in order to inform strategies for managing challenging behaviour. The Registered Manager is able to identify possible causes for a recent increase in the frequency of challenging behaviour. The home's records show that the Registered Manager regularly checks these records and adds comments for improvement or clarification. The Registered Manager also produces a quarterly assessment about the quality of each required record. The manager occasionally proposes a particular strategy while undertaking these quarterly assessments. However, the home has yet to introduce systems and processes for routinely using trends to inform assessments of the efficacy or otherwise of behaviour management strategies.

The home maintains detailed internal placement plans. Within these, needs and target behaviours are clearly identified. However, when faced with young people who put themselves at risk by trying to leave the home after dark, the home does not convene a multi-agency risk management meeting in order to develop a risk management strategy.

The final recommendation was that the external line-management monitoring visitor should go to the home when young people are available to give their views. This practice has now started. It is also evident that the home responds appropriately

and in a timely way to the reports of these visits. This means that young people benefit because their views are included in these routine assessments of the care they receive.

While the home has not carried out a specific consultation exercise with young people since the last inspection, monthly house meetings always include an element of consultation. Indeed, young people have used the meetings to influence the decoration of a bedroom and to prevent a proposed relocation of the staff office. This means that young people are routinely involved in matters that affect them about the operation of the home.

The home continues to enable improving outcomes for young people. An example of this is where the home has, through its admission practice, maximised the potential for the young people to be compatible. The home has also been proactive in enlisting the support of an external health professional; changing its routines to ensure that young people have appropriate privacy, and successfully using a deliberate strategy to reduce challenging behaviour by encouraging an incompatible alternative. This means that young people experience care that is flexible and adapts to their needs as circumstances change.

Young people are relaxed in the company of staff, and interactions are generally warm and friendly. Staff are sensitive to the need for some young people to play and be imaginative. Young people confirmed feeling safe in the home and with staff and other young people.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure there are effective procedures for monitoring the home's care practices. This is in relation to using the recording systems to identify when young people are making progress in order to clarify which of the home's strategies was successful in enabling that progress, including in relation to the use of physical restraint (Volume 5, statutory guidance, para 3.23)
- ensure that if there is a pattern of a young person putting her/himself at risk by trying to leave the home after dark, then the home will, with the responsible authority for the young person, convene a multi-agency risk management meeting to develop a strategy for managing the risk. The agreed strategy will be recorded in the young person's care plan and placement plan. (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.83)