

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC392549        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 25/03/2014      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Deborah White   |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Interim         |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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|--------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 12/06/2013 |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for three children with emotional and behavioural problems. The home is owned and operated by a private provider.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Good progress</b>         | 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. |
| <b>Satisfactory progress</b> | 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.                                  |
| <b>Inadequate progress</b>   | 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**.

The children's home was judged as adequate at the last inspection that was undertaken on 12 June 2013. Since then the home have made inadequate progress. This is because the home have failed to meet two previous requirements and some recommendations. Therefore the home's performance and outcomes for children have declined.

The home has improved by meeting a recommendation to ensure staff sign documents with their full name. Restraint recording is improved but there is a new recommendation to ensure all physical restraints are fully described. This is to ensure children can reflect on what happened and understand how they were restrained and why.

The children going missing procedure has been updated and provides staff with clear guidance of the actions they need to take if a vulnerable missing child is at risk. Records for children going missing are also improved and show that staff respond to concerns about missing children.

Outcomes for children are variable. Some children have progressed from their starting point and other children have experienced unsatisfactory outcomes. Overall, feedback from children at this inspection is generally positive.

The environment continues to provide homely, comfortable accommodation that meets children's needs. The home is clean and tidy and well maintained. Children are provided with healthy meals and healthy living is encouraged. Activities are positive and children are made welcome in their local community.

Staff are committed to the children and to working in the home. They acknowledge they have been through a difficult period but feel improvements have been made that are impacting positively on children. Relationships with children are positive and staff morale is felt to be strong.

A previous requirement to promptly notify the host local authority designated officer (LADO) of an allegation against a member of staff has not been met. There has been a concern raised by a child since the last inspection and the home have not followed the home or local authority child protection procedures by contacting the LADO without delay. This potentially puts children's welfare and safety at risk where allegations are not addressed immediately.

Additionally, there was a delay in a strategy meeting being arranged and some confusion as to who was leading the investigation. Although the Registered Manager is not directly responsible for coordinating child protection enquiries, and she did contact both the host and placing authority for updates and information, she did not question or challenge the way the matter was handled to ensure the child's allegation was dealt with quickly and appropriately.

Most staff have received recent child protection training and all staff have previously undertaken some level of training. However, staff are unclear of the systems for reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse. Although staff are aware of the process for contacting the home's on-call manager following a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, none of the staff spoken to knew that they should notify the relevant local authority in the first instance. This demonstrates a lack of understanding and knowledge of child protection procedures to fully ensure children's welfare is promoted.

The second previous requirement not met is to notify without delay all matters listed in regulations, namely those in Schedule 5. There have been some significant delays in notifications being made and some instances where notifiable events have not been recognised, and as such have not been sent to Ofsted. This means the home is not supplying important information to Ofsted that would be used to monitor the home's performance and children's safety.

Since the last inspection there has been an escalation in children displaying violent and challenging behaviour. This has resulted in an increase in police involvement. In some cases children have been arrested and prosecuted for their behaviour as the

staff on duty did not feel able to use restraint to prevent significant damage to property. As a result, some children have been criminalised.

Staff are trained to use low-level restraint techniques and some de-escalation, which has previously met the needs of the children accommodated. However, staff are not experienced or trained to handle high levels of aggression and threatening behaviour. This means that some children's placement needs and objectives have not always been met. Also, not all children's known risks are recorded in their individual risk management plans to ensure all staff are aware of each child's vulnerabilities and the measures in place to keep them safe.

There are also some training shortfalls in leadership and management. In particular training in human resources, employment law and the writing of robust policies and procedures. This has impacted on the quality of some of the documentation inspected in that not all the home's policies and procedures are compliant with regulation.

Prescribed staffing levels are maintained and where possible staff left in charge have substantial knowledge and experience of working in the children's home. New staff receive an induction to the home and skills and experience are taken into account when planning duty rotas. Due to a recent turnover of long-term staff and employment of new staff some shifts have been covered by staff who have worked at the home for a relatively short period of time i.e. approximately three months. This means that on some shifts the staff team are not adequately skilled or experienced to meet the needs of children with complex and challenging behaviours.

Not all newly accommodated children have been assessed by the home to ensure the home can meet their needs. The Statement of Purpose states that all children referred to the home will be assessed by the Registered Manager and the Responsible Individual. This is to ensure that as far as practicable, the registered persons can make a joint judgement that the staff team have the skills, knowledge, training and experience to promote good outcomes and keep children safe.

In addition, the registered persons are tasked to ensure that any new children will not, as far as can be judged, impact on the resident group. This has not happened on every occasion and children have been inappropriately placed. As a consequence some settled placements have been disrupted and a child moved on from the home without adequate planning. This compromises children's stability.

Previous recommendations not met are to ensure the children's guide includes the information listed in the national minimum standards and to improve the e-safety and child sexual exploitation policies. These recommendations will be raised again in this report.

There are two repeated and three new requirements and two repeated recommendations and three new recommendations.

## **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   |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 16<br>(2001) | ensure prompt referral is made to the local authority in whose area the home is situated of any allegation of abuse or neglect, in particular ensure that any allegations against staff are reported promptly to the local authority designated officer (Regulation 16(2)(b))           | 07/05/2014 |
| 30<br>(2001) | notify Ofsted if any of the relevant events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 take place. (Regulation 30(1))                                                                                                                                                                | 07/05/2014 |
| 23<br>(2001) | ensure that any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably possible free from avoidable risks. In particular, ensure that children have a written risk management plan that records known safeguarding risks and how these will be minimised (Regulation 23 (b)) | 30/04/2014 |
| 27<br>(2001) | ensure all staff receive appropriate training. In particular restraint training for all staff that meets the needs of children accommodated (Regulation 27 (4) (a))                                                                                                                     | 14/05/2014 |
| 4<br>(2001)  | compile in relation to the children's home which shall include the matters listed in Schedule 1. In particular, accurately describe and comply with any criteria used for admissions to the home (Regulation 4 (1) Schedule 1 point (9).)                                               | 07/05/2014 |

## Recommendations

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

- ensure that if staff resort to using restraint this is carefully recorded with full details by the staff involved within 24 hours in the homes record which is kept for the purpose. In particular, ensure the measures used are clearly described (Children's Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5; paragraph 2.91).
- ensure there is a good quality learning and development programme which staff are supported to undertake. It shall include training to enhance individual skills. In particular, ensure the Registered Manager is equipped with the skills required for professional development and the purpose of the setting (NMS 18.1)
- ensure staff members who are placed in charge of the home and other staff at particular times have substantial relevant experience of working in the home and have successfully completed their induction and probationary periods (NMS 17.5)
- ensure the young people's guide to the home includes all the information

specified in NMS 13.5 (NMS 13.5)

- ensure the home's safeguarding policy is comprehensive and in particular includes procedures and advice in relation to e-safety and child sexual exploitation (NMS 4.1 and Children's Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5; paragraph 2.67).

## 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*.