

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	19/03/2014
Inspector	Mary Timms
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	27/09/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people who are diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum and/or having learning disabilities and who are unable to live with their families due to the complexity of their diagnosis.

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**.

When this home was last inspected in September 2013 the overall effectiveness of the service was judged to be adequate. This inspection judges that requirements set at that time have been met and that the home has made satisfactory progress.

A good standard of direct care is provided by a committed staff team who work hard to promote positive outcomes for the young people in their care. Placements are very stable with some young people living in the home for several years. As a result, young people have built positive and trusting relationships with core members of the staff team. This stability has also resulted in the staff team developing a good understanding of individuals and behaviours in the context of each young person's disabilities. External professionals and parents have a positive view of the service provided and also the impact the service has had on young people. Comments include, 'xx has progressed well in the last six months, xx has matured, become more sociable and self-aware, xx is now more able to adjust to differing situations', linking this directly to the care provided.

There have been several changes in the management team over the last eight months. The present manager is currently applying to Ofsted for registration as the home's manager. The manager is supported by senior managers from the Local Authority providing this service, and by senior staff working in the home. Comments from parents include their observation that the 'team is now more stable' and that 'the move away from using agency staff is noted as having a positive impact on young people.' Staff talk positively about the team 'morale is very high and we all work well together as a team.'

There is evidence of improved consultation taking place with young people during external management visits to the home and also within the internal management monitoring of the care provided. As a result, young people feel that their views are valued. While direct contact is not made with parents in a structured manner, in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided, evidence of consultation is available within the home. This shows that the staff have regular contact with parents and demonstrates that parents views are listened to.

Internal management oversight of the quality of the care provided has improved. The management team now undertake structured monitoring checks on a monthly basis. Information gathered is then summarised and submitted to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) Ofsted, in a report as required by regulation. Reports show that management oversight is more organised and that managers are evaluating the impact the service has on young people.

In response to a recommendation set on the last inspection the staff have been working imaginatively with young people to encourage their independence through the learning of basic cookery skills. In the absence of an appropriate kitchen area young people's experience is restricted to initial food preparation only. However, more recently management approval has been given for the development of a designated kitchen area within the home, specifically for the young people. As a result, they will begin to develop independence skills and become more confident within a supportive environment.

While some staff members have received an increased level of direct one-to-one supervision with a manager since the last inspection, shortfalls continue in this area, which was a recommendation at last inspection. Also, policy and procedures for staff working as waking night care staff and in assistant carer roles dictate that they only require an annual supervision meeting. Furthermore, not all care staff have received appropriate induction training, and there is delay in some staff receiving core training. As a result, not all staff members receive the support and guidance necessary to ensure that they develop fully in their role, and that they are competent and effective to meet young people's needs to the highest standards.

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
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate training and supervision(Regulation 27(4a))	20/05/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that new staff undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards, commencing with 7 working days of starting their employment and being completed with 6 months. This includes staff working in waking night and 'home care aid' positions (NMS 18.3)
- ensure that care staff hold level 3 Children and Young Peoples Workforce Diploma, or be working towards the Diploma within 6 months of confirmation of employment (NMS 18.5)
- ensure that all staff are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. In particular this relates to the need to update the policy and procedures relating to staff supervision, as the frequency of meetings for some care roles is currently set out as only one supervision meeting per year. Policy should be altered to a more appropriate frequency. (NMS 19.4)

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*.