

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC398253
Inspection date	25/02/2013
Inspector	Gillian Walters
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	21/09/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is operated by a private provider, who has three other children's homes in the locality. It provides a service to five young males, between the ages of 12 and 17 years. The home cares for young people with learning disabilities as well as those who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties. The organisation also operates a school, registered with the Department for Education, providing fully-integrated programmes of care and education.

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 last inspection in September 2012 the home was judged as being good. Since this time, satisfactory progress has been made in addressing both requirements made at the last inspection and one of the two recommendations identified for improvement.

The home has successfully revised and updated its Statement of Purpose to include detail of staff, their qualifications and experience. The home has experienced a number of staff changes in the last few months, mostly due to staff transferring to a home newly registered by the company. This has had the impact of weakening what was a well-established staff team that were very familiar with the young people placed.

The manager has worked closely with his staff team to support practice within the

home to ensure consistent care and behaviour management practice. Young people's progress and care planning is routinely discussed at staff meetings and staff debriefing is taking place following any incidents that occur with young people. The home is documenting and maintaining records of staff meetings and de-briefing sessions as required to demonstrate good practice. However, although staff say they feel well supported by the Registered Manager, it has been established that the frequency of staff supervision is not occurring regularly or in accordance with the home's policy. The lack of structured supervision time means that staff are not being given sufficient formal opportunity to reflect and develop their practice.

As a result of recent staff changes, the home has lost a number of staff who were previously identified as young people's key workers. The home has identified a new key worker for each young person. However, it is still struggling to ensure that they all receive regular planned one-to-one sessions with those staff to reflect on their care planning and progress within the home. Young people do have frequent access to staff for discussion and other opportunities, such as young people's meetings and daily house meetings to make their views and wishes known. However, this does not provide them with the focused opportunity for discussion and reflection on all key aspects of their care.

The home has positive quality assurance arrangements in place to monitor the effectiveness of practice and the quality of care provided. Regulation 33 visits take place on a regular monthly basis and reports from these visits demonstrate thorough scrutiny of the service. The manager has successfully produced a regulation 34 report that takes account of a period of monitoring and provides good evaluation of his service at that time. The Registered Manager maintains a regular routine of monitoring his service on a monthly basis and identifies actions required as a result of this. However, in recent months significant delays have occurred in acting on a number of minor deficiencies identified. Although this has not had any significant implications for the safety or welfare of young people, this does weaken the effectiveness of the internal monitoring process.

The home has a system in place to notify Ofsted and other relevant bodies of any significant events that may occur within the home or with young people and usually this has been effective. However, there has been one occasion identified where needless delay occurred in notifying Ofsted. Delay in providing such information limits the regulator's ability in monitoring the home's effectiveness.

Young people are mostly making good progress in their placements with positive achievements identified in education and their development in working towards greater independence. For some young people this has meant learning new skills that include budgeting, shopping, and meal preparation. The home has also been successful in identifying and promoting work experience placements for some young people. This provides a positive experience for new skills to be learned that will increase future opportunities for employment for those achieving their independence.

The home is comfortable for young people, nicely furnished and well maintained. It is currently being re-decorated and upgraded to provide improved facilities for young

people. This includes refurbishment of the kitchen within the home to ensure that young people who are ready to develop their independent cooking skills have separate facilities available to them.

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 supervision (Regulation 27(4)(a))	29/03/2013
30 (2001)	ensure that all significant events are notified to Ofsted without delay in accordance with the relevant schedule. (Regulation 30(1))	29/03/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support. This relates specifically to ensuring that they have the benefit of regular one-to-one sessions with identified staff and during this time have sufficient opportunity to discuss all key aspects of their care (NMS 1.3)
- ensure the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies and that immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring. (NMS 21.2)

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*.