

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	27/03/2013
Inspector	Rachel Ruth Britten
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	09/10/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide care to up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private limited company.

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 **good progress**.

The children's home has demonstrated continued progress in quality of care since the last inspection in October 2012, when it was graded as 'good' overall. As a result, young people are making progress and the outcomes for them continue to be very good, given their starting points and the complexity of their emotional and behavioural difficulties. Young people have made significant-enough progress to move on to a larger setting where they can begin to work on their social skills.

Where appropriate, young people enjoy and benefit from continuing therapeutic links with key staff after they have left. Other young people in the home are benefiting from considerably more frequent and better quality contact visits to their family home and siblings. This is a direct result of the high quality work and cooperative relationships forged between staff and young people's parents. Young people are very positive about the home and want to stay here until they are prepared for independent living. This is because young people enjoy very positive relationships with the small, consistent staff group and feel valued as individuals by all staff and the manager. Social workers continue to be impressed by the improved outcomes young people achieve. For example, they comment that the home is able to keep

young people engaged in education and therapy and to forge working relationships with their families, where many other placements have failed in these regards. Social workers say 'it's brilliant' and they are 'very impressed' by the quality of care given by staff through high staff ratios, good supervision, and consistency.

The home have addressed the requirement and recommendation made at the last inspection. The staff continue to make timely notifications to Ofsted and other appropriate parties. They also have a transparent working style, where incidents are robustly recorded, discussed, and notified. Young people feel safe because the home operates openly and consistently with regard to risks and incidents. Continuous monitoring and discussion with other homes in the organisation ensures on-going review, development and improvement in all aspects of the home's functioning and incident management systems.

Recent improvements to records prompt staff to record young people's views and comments better and to ensure that sufficient detail is recorded and cross-referenced to other records as necessary. For example, physical intervention, missing from home, behaviour management and risk assessment record forms are all improved since the last inspection. These records now better meet regulations and standards and are more user-friendly. They are also more useable for rigorous monitoring activity, so that lessons are learnt and patterns and trends identified.

The recommendation concerning staffing levels has also been given continuing attention. Shifts are organised to ensure that members of staff never work alone overnight even if there is only one young person in residence. Lessons have also been learnt about management cover during longer periods of leave. This is because considerable stress and difficulty occurred during one such period when the contingency arrangements put in place by the manager did not prove sufficient or effective.

Young people continue to benefit from safe care and continuous opportunities for their views, wishes and feelings to be heard. Recent incidents of bullying have been dealt with very well, so that young people, social workers and stakeholders are very satisfied with the outcomes. Similarly, procedures to protect young people from exploitation and abuse are effective and individually tailored to their risks. Measures to protect young people are effective and proportionate, so that an institutional feel is avoided.

Young people understand their own plans and agreements, for example, about phones, the internet, possession and use of cigarettes and lighters and free time. They work towards trust and freedoms in clear, measured ways which are balanced with the therapeutic approach of all staff. Young people are encouraged to say their views and sign records when incidents have taken place and they all have ready access to staff and managers throughout each day. Their views and those of their families and social workers are sought by the manager who sends out feedback questionnaires on a regular basis. However, the visitor who reports monthly on the quality of the home, rarely takes into account the views of young people and other stakeholders. This is a missed opportunity for someone outside of the daily running

of the home to assess and comment on the quality of the home from all these persons' points of view. The manager welcomes any such feedback and uses it positively in her work with the staff team.

The manager and staff demonstrate good morale and insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the home. They strive to maintain consistency and achieve this, even though they are currently short of staff. They have been inspired by a 'Pillars of Parenting' course recently attended which they say was 'Brilliant and amazing, endorsing the way we work already.' The team are also implementing an independence training pack which they have devised to prepare young people from aged 15 towards adult life. Their current agenda is to return to more planned key work with young people and less reliance on key work sessions as a 'fire fighting' response when incidents have occurred. They hope this will enhance the quality of key worker relationships with young people. The manager is currently reviewing the last six months of her own monitoring activity in order to provide Ofsted with a review of the patterns and trends in care quality.

All staff continue to work closely with social workers and liaise with them regarding the mix of young people and the impact of proposed new placements in the home. As a result, stakeholders express very high levels of confidence in the home's work.

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
33 (2001)	ensure that the visitor interviews, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working in the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	28/04/2013

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*.