

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	13/03/2013
Inspector	Jennifer Reed
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	29/11/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Young people in placement may attend the organisation's local school which is registered with the Department for 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 full inspection of the home on 29 November 2012, the overall effectiveness of the service was judged to be adequate. Managers have taken satisfactory action to address the one requirement and the six recommendations made at the last inspection. This has improved the quality of care provided to young people.

Managers and staff show commitment and resilience in their approach to providing a high standard of individualised care to the young people they support and look after. Staff have high aspirations for each young person and managers strive to achieve exemplary standards of practice. Some young people are making good progress in their social and personal development. They are regularly attending school, or increasing their level of attendance. The home works cooperatively and collaboratively with other agencies, placing authorities and families to provide sound care and support, designed to meet the individual needs of each young person.

The management of the organisation gives due consideration to ensuring that the

home only provides admission to those young people whose assessed needs they can reasonably expect to meet. Managers are effectively utilising the knowledge they have gained from past placements to improve their assessment of suitable future placements. Placement stability is a particular strength of this service. The senior managers' in-depth knowledge and experience, alongside their reflection on lessons learned, contributes to improving the likelihood of placement stability for young people. Managers also identify when it is appropriate for individual young people to move on to ensure their needs are being effectively met.

The registered manager of the home, supported by a senior member of the staff team, has taken substantial measures to ensure that the staff fully record any incident involving the use of restraint. Model examples of such recording are readily available to staff for their reference. This provides adequate guidance and contributes to safeguarding young people. The manager reports that the variable quality of restraint recording practice has been discussed with the staff team on several occasions. Managers regularly review the restraints record for compliance with the home's policies and children's homes regulations and standards. Their review evaluates the standard of recording and the appropriateness of the use of restraint, which contributes to ensuring young people are protected. There has been notable improvement in the quality of the recording of restraints undertaken in recent months. Staff now include the duration of any restraint within the record. However, this improvement has not been sustained in all entries. The dedicated restraint record shows that in one entry since the last inspection the duration of the restraint undertaken was not included. Furthermore, in three other entries insufficient detail was provided about the details of the young person's behaviour that necessitated the use of restraint. This shortfall in recording inhibits effective monitoring processes to ensure that young people are treated fairly and are protected.

Staff are supporting young people to positively deal with their problems and to resolve arising conflicts, with variable success. Key worker sessions take place with the aim of helping young people to develop their relationship skills to support them to live harmoniously together with each other and the staff team. As a result, damage within the home has reduced and some young people are learning to show more tolerance towards each other. Key worker sessions also focus on helping young people to understand the risks of leaving the home without permission. As a result, the number of missing episodes has also reduced. However, direct work records lack sufficient detail, particularly in relation to the provision of an evaluation of the impact of each session. The records do not provide sufficient detail to measure the session's level of success in supporting young people to gain a better understanding of the dangers of risk taking behaviours. Should young people wish to view their files now or in the future, the brief key worker records do not provide them with a clear account of discussions held, including their views.

Staff follow young people when they leave the home without permission to try to persuade them to swiftly return to the home and to ensure they are kept safe. Staff and young people's safety has now been improved by the provision of new guidance for staff in how to safely follow young people on these occasions. This reduces the

identified risk posed to young people and staff when going onto an unlit rural road at night-time.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- provide further training in recording information to equip staff with the skills they need to implement the home's policies and procedures effectively (NMS 18.1)
- ensure staff understand the nature of records maintained and follow the home's policy for the keeping of files and records (NMS 22.1)
- ensure information about the child is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. (NMS 22.5)

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*.