

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	22/10/2013
Inspector	David Coulter
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	21/05/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is an independent residential home that cares for up to six young people who may have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

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**.

Since the last inspection the acting manager has successfully completed the registration process and a new deputy manager has been appointed. Since her appointment the manager has striven to create a warm and stimulating environment with clear behavioural boundaries that are consistently applied by the homes well motivated staff team. While significant progress has clearly been made, the rate of improvement has been inhibited by continuing staffing difficulties. Although appropriate staffing levels are being maintained, the staff team is currently two members short. As the home no longer deploys any agency staff, shortfalls are being covered by members of the existing team. According to the manager, this situation is unsustainable in the long term. However, two new staff have been appointed but they cannot start until they receive their DBS clearance.

The composition of the resident group has changed since the last inspection. One young person, with extremely complex needs, who was struggling in the group, has moved to another unit. Members of the current group get on well together and their behaviours are characterised by similar autistic traits. Another young person has moved in and appears to have settled well. He said, 'I like it here it is by far the best

home I have been in.' The manager said that after a difficult September the group have settled and behavioural boundaries have been established. Young people are responding to the homes behaviour management approach, with its emphasis on the positive reinforcement of constructive behaviour. Staff have been extremely successful in helping young people break patterns of anti-social and self-destructive behaviours. The number of incidents involving physical interventions has decreased significantly over the last month. There have been no instances of young people being reported missing. As young people's behaviour has improved they are gaining more privileges. Due to their progress a number have had their risk assessments updated to allow them to spend more time in the local community without the supervision of staff.

Outcomes for young people are good and young people continue to make progress in many aspects of their lives, including their education. All the current residents attend school and attendance levels are extremely good. Young people are now involved in a range of social and recreational activities in the local community including the army cadets, street dancing, horse riding and rugby.

There was one recommendation arising out of the last inspection regarding the lack of a programme for young people to acquire independent living skills. Staff have now developed and introduced an independent skills assessment tool that is being managed by key workers. This tool allows staff to determine each individual's knowledge and skills in key areas. The information acquired from the assessments are used to develop programmes that are tailored to the needs of each individual.

Although the home operates as a communal unit staff still place great emphasis on ensuring the physical social and emotional needs of each young person are met. For example, one young person who is confused about his sexual identity is being helped to access a specialist support group. Staff help young people maintain regular contact with their families and liaise effectively with placing authorities.

There is one recommendation arising from this inspection that relates directly to sufficiency within the staff team.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home's staff team has the capacity to meet the needs of young people being accommodated. (NMS 17.1)

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*.