

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC411616
Inspection date	29/02/2012
Inspector	David Putnam
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	10/06/2011
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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 (March 2011)*.

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is privately owned by an established company. The home is registered to accommodate a maximum of three young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. A therapeutic approach is taken in working with children and young people with the aim of enabling them to return to their family home or to an alternative family placement.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **satisfactory** progress.

At the last inspection the home was judged to be outstanding. No requirements or recommendations were made. Effective leadership and management remains in place. This ensures that the quality of care and outcomes for children are maintained.

The home has experienced some change since the last inspection. The placement of one young person resulted in a planned return home. However, this development resulted in a period when children were unsettled. Staff had to manage challenging behaviours over this period of time. This resulted in a higher than usual number of restraints of children. The central restraint log provides limited information. Detailed records of restraints are made, but they are stored in files and books for each child. These records do not provide all the information required by the regulations in one volume.

Staff have worked through this difficult time. Children are settled again. Managers and staff are eager to learn from the experience. Staff feel they now understand the needs of the children better. Placement plans have been updated and staff are working with other professionals to improve the service children receive.

Children attend mainstream schools and are able to recognise that they are doing well there. Staff support children's learning through promoting the importance of homework. Positive links with schools exist. For one child this includes an online system that keeps staff informed. This provides details of any homework, behaviour issues, attendance, assessment, timetable and announcements from the school. Any letters from the school are also sent via email to the home.

The emotional, psychological and physical health needs of children are met through the support of staff and relevant health professionals. Children engage with play therapy. The parent organisation is commissioning other therapists to expand the options available to children. Children are helped to manage significant physical health issues along with the emotional impact this has.

Children regularly take part in a range of activities within their local community. These include, sea and army cadets, guides, youth clubs, training with and playing for local football clubs. This helps children to develop their confidence and social skills. Children speak enthusiastically about these activities, saying they enjoy them and, 'make lots of friends'. Staff encourage children to invite friends back to the home to develop these relationships. Managers describe a desire to present the home as no different to any other family home.

Staff are keen to seek the views of children. Children speak very positively about the relationships they have with their key workers. Space is provided for children to write down what they are feeling at any time. Investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly, quickly and effectively in a way that protects children. Staff affected are also provided with appropriate support. Children are encouraged to provide their views to national bodies and external consultations. The home is working towards attaining an award through a national advocacy initiative. However, despite a clear desire to give a voice to children it is not always apparent how the views of children influence the running of the home. Reports from monthly monitoring visits and regular reviews of the quality of care are routinely submitted to Ofsted. Managers speak with children when undertaking these processes. However, reports do not provide significant detail about the views of children. During this inspection children shared information with the inspector. They asked for this to be passed on to staff, so that the adults would know how they felt.

Certificates are displayed in the home to celebrate achievements. Numerous photographs of the children provide a consistent message that this is their home. Children live in a home that is decorated and maintained to a high standard. An ongoing plan for improvement is in place. Committed staff work well together and there are good systems of communication. This helps to provide continuity and consistency for children. Managers in the home and in the parent organisation communicate an aspiration for high standards. This is demonstrated in an ongoing commitment to provide the best service possible for the children in this home.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in the children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which shall include all details listed in these regulations. (Regulation 17B (3) and (4))	02/04/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children in the home are regularly involved in contributing to monitoring the operation of the home, and their views and any concerns are seriously taken into account. (NMS 21.1)