

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC412971
Inspection date	25/03/2013
Inspector	Gillian Walters
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	15/11/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is operated by a private organisation. The home provides residential and respite care and accommodation for up to four young people with learning disabilities.

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 November 2012, the overall effectiveness judgement of the home was adequate. There were a significant number of requirements and recommendations made as a result of this inspection. The home has taken appropriate action to meet all requirements and has made satisfactory progress in addressing the majority of recommendations, while maintaining a good quality of care for young people living in the home.

The home has appointed a new manager, who has successfully applied to Ofsted to become the home's Registered Manager. She has good knowledge and experience of working with children and young people with a broad range of disabilities and complex needs. She has established a good understanding of the needs of the young people currently in her care and has achieved positive working relationships with staff to ensure that they feel appropriately supported. One member of staff commented of the home 'it's like a different house, there is positive management support.'

The home is now appropriately resourced with a permanent staff team, only occasionally using a member of the company's bank staff to support young people. This ensures greater consistency of care for the young people placed. All existing staff members hold an appropriate qualification or are enrolled and working towards one. Plans are in place to enrol new recruits for qualification once they have successfully completed their induction and probationary period. This means that the home is committed to ensuring that young people are supported by adults who are suitably experienced and able to achieve qualification in working with children and young people if they don't already possess this.

The home has clear arrangements in place for staff supervision and appraisal. Staff receive regular and frequent supervision sessions in accordance with their own individual needs. Appraisals for all staff and probationary interviews for recent recruits are clearly scheduled and take place. The manager is providing good support to her staff team and is establishing clear management routines and good practice expectations; for example, full staff attendance at regular team meetings. A staff member confirmed 'staff are supervised, team meetings are occurring and the manager is visible.' The new arrangements have clearly had a positive impact on staff morale within the home and demonstrate that a level of management and leadership has been restored.

The home has improved communication with Ofsted, ensuring that the regulator is advised of changes within the home and notified of events as they occur, avoiding unnecessary delays. This means that Ofsted is kept informed of matters that may impact on the quality of care provided and is able to monitor and maintain an overview of the effectiveness of the home's practice. The manager has appropriately monitored her service on a regular monthly basis since coming into post. She has also successfully completed and provided Ofsted with a copy of a review of a six-month period of monitoring. This provides good evaluation of the service and has enabled the manager to identify areas for further improvement.

Young people's families are routinely consulted to establish an understanding of their young people's needs and wishes. The home uses a range of pictorial and signing communication systems to ensure that young people's individual daily needs and choices are successfully addressed. However, young people are still not receiving regular individual sessions with keyworkers, which would provide them good and focused opportunities to express and communicate their views on a wider range of matters concerning their care and support.

Since the last inspection, young people's files have been successfully re-organised and updated with new care and behaviour support plans. A system has been introduced to review these on a monthly basis. This ensures that young people's personal information and documented planning is kept current and is easily accessible to staff, to promote their understanding of young people and their care needs. Each young person has a documented personal emergency evacuation plan and fire evacuation procedures have been practiced, specifically during the hours of darkness. This ensures that staff and young people are familiar with what they need to do in the event of a real emergency to ensure their safety.

The home is a comfortable environment for young people, which is designed to meet their individual and specific needs. During inspection it was found that some bedrooms lacked sufficient window coverings, such as blinds or curtains. This shortfall compromises young people's rights to privacy and to be treated with dignity.

Areas for improvement

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 young people having individual time with identified staff, commonly known as keyworkers, who can creatively provide opportunities to enable young people to express and communicate their views (NMS 1.3)
- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. This relates specifically to ensuring that each young person's bedroom has curtains or blinds that protect their privacy. (NMS 10.3)

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*.