

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	03/01/2013
Inspector	Jo Stephenson
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	24/05/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care and accommodation for two young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The service is operated by a private organisation.

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 **inadequate progress**.

This interim inspection has focused on the progress made by the home since the last full inspection in May 2012. The overall judgement at that time was outstanding and two recommendations were made. These recommendations, covering the use of door alarms and the monitoring of central records, have been addressed. However, the service has made inadequate progress. There are significant shortfalls in the quality of care for young people, notably in relation to health care, consultation and participation. This means that outcomes for young people have declined and two requirements and five recommendations have been raised.

The young people living in the home at the time of the last inspection have left. Young people with more complex and challenging behavioural needs have been admitted to the service. Subsequently, there has been a significant increase in the occurrence of negative incidents and episodes of aggression by young people.

Staff are competent in building relationships with young people, who say they 'get along well' with the staff team. Staff regularly complete debrief sessions with young people following all incidents of concern. However, because incident records are not

evaluated or monitored, staff are unable to identify patterns or triggers relating to periods of unsettled behaviour. This means that young people do not benefit from comprehensive intervention plans that support their progress and development.

Although young people participate in keywork sessions with staff, the value of these is variable because they do not address the prominent needs of young people. For example, weekly 'reward' programmes devised by staff are inappropriate and unfair because they do not reflect the multifaceted emotional needs of young people or their opinions. This means that young people are not encouraged to reflect on, or take responsibility for, their behaviour. As a result, young people do not discuss these issues with staff and therefore their internal plans do not effectively reflect their views and wishes. Key work sessions are not cross referenced to case files. Staff do not accurately update case files, sign entries made or effectively review support plans. Consequently, case records do not provide a meaningful contribution to a young person's understanding of their lives.

The home has established links with health service professionals, such as mental health agencies. However, these links are not appropriately utilised to provide young people with a holistic approach to meeting their health needs. Health plans completed by staff do not include the specific emotional and psychological needs of individual young people, or stipulate bespoke support to be provided by the home. Documents pertaining to statutory medical assessments and immunisation records for young people are not available in case records. Staff and managers have not ensured that this information is received from placing authorities. This means that young people do not benefit from an integrated approach to supporting their health needs. The absence of adequate staff guidance and training to understand the health needs of young people means that staff are ill equipped to support young people with complex health needs.

Staff maintain regular contact with placing authorities and have ensured that all statutory placement plans are available. The home works closely with families, when appropriate, to provide feedback on behaviour and commend the individual achievements of young people. Young people receive practical support to maintain and further develop relationships with their families, and others who are important to them. This is a key strength of the home and means that young people are not isolated from their families.

The home operates a modified rota that provides young people with a suitable level of care and support. However, the rota pattern does not recognise how potential staff shortfalls would be addressed, as there is no viable contingency plan in place for this. Consequently, young people may not always benefit from receiving care from individual staff that are known to them or understand their individual needs.

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
20 (2001)	promote and protect the physical, emotional and mental health of the children accommodated in the children's home (Regulation 20(1))	11/02/2013
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child; is kept up to date; and is signed and dated by the author of each written entry. (Regulation 28(1)(a)(b)(c))	11/02/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support (NMS 1.3)
- ensure rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children (NMS 3.8)
- regularly review incidents of challenging behaviour and examine trends or issues emerging from this, to enable staff to reflect and learn to inform future practice (NMS 3.8)
- ensure staff receive regular guidance and training to provide appropriate care if looking after children with complex health needs (NMS 6.8)
- ensure contingency plans are in place in the event of a shortfall in staffing levels. (NMS 17.3)

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*.