

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	06/03/2012
Inspector	Caroline Brailsford
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	27/10/2011
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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

This is a home that provides accommodation for up to 3 young people, aged from 10 to 17 years old, at any one time. It is part of the Blue Mountain Group of homes.

Progress

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

The service has been given a judgement of satisfactory. This is because despite one action from the last inspection not being fully completed, there has been some progress which demonstrates its capacity to improve. From the two actions set at the last inspection, one has been fully completed and there have therefore been improvements to the décor in the home. The implementation of a decorating programme has improved the look of the home and some carpets have been replaced or cleaned. The second action set at the last inspection is regarding staff sleeping in accommodation. This was set because staff were using the young people's lounge as an additional sleeping area as well as the staff sleeping in room. There has been some progress with this action although it is not fully completed. The Registered Manager has submitted plans to the planning authority to build an extension to the building. This will provide the required staff sleeping in accommodation. He is expecting planning permission to be granted and has arranged for builders to complete the work as soon as the plans are passed.

At the last inspection to the home, there were seven recommendations set and five of these have been completed. This reflects improvements to the staffing on individual shifts where there are now both males and females on duty on each shift. Also the staff training programme is improved; it now ensures that all staff are either enrolled on, or have completed the level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma qualification or equivalent. Further improvements to the service also include the achievement records for individual young people and the home's development plan. Also the use of door alarms as surveillance is now contained in a new policy that sets out how they should be used.

There has been some progress on one of the other recommendations made at the last inspection but this has been repeated as it is not fully completed at this time. The welcome pack now contains the telephone numbers of Ofsted and the young person's own independent reviewing officer. However, it does not yet contain the telephone number of the Children's Rights Director. The remaining recommendation has also been repeated as the Statement of Purpose still does not contain the correct information about how many staff sleep in the building should all the young people be resident.

The home's development plan has been improved by the Registered Manager since the last inspection. The format is different and the document now includes measurable targets and monitoring systems. This improves outcomes for young people because it ensures that the development targets are achieved. The development plan does not contain the timescales for action regarding the building work planned. However, the plan is very thorough otherwise and it is clear that the young people are at the centre of the developments taking place. For example, there have been improvements to the care planning and key working sessions. These are now more streamlined and the documents are completed in such a way that young people can understand their progress better. Young people also continue to be well supported with the difficulties they face. For example, the staff assist the young people to understand their care plan in stages, so that they can understand and digest the information. This ensures that they can have their say about what happens in their own life.

Young people continue to make progress in this home and the manager ensures that he continues to drive forward further improvements to the lives of individuals. For example, there has been a significant decrease in instances of missing from care since the last inspection. Intensive work has been undertaken with young people to ensure that their safety and welfare is improved in this area. For example, maintaining very positive relationships between staff and young people. In turn, young people more readily accept support and advice from staff on issues of safety, helping to protect their welfare. Staffing levels are excellent and provide one-to-one care for young people. This enables staff to be creative in providing individual activities. Holiday accommodation is used to further develop confidence and self-esteem through the use of outdoor activities and high levels of support. In these situations, young people are helped to explore their issues outside their usual environment. Young people say this helps them to make good progress, develop in confidence and that they are safer as a result.

Young people report that the manager makes further changes to benefit them. One young person said 'the manager is the best, he looks after us well'. In particular, young people also report significant improvements to the décor in the building where their bedrooms have been redecorated in their own choice of colour and also to leisure, where they each have activities which they enjoy. This helps them to be more confident and therefore develops their self-esteem because they have found interests that they like and enjoy. One young person has also enjoyed overnight stays with friends since the last inspection. This demonstrates how the manager is forward thinking and prepared to take measurable and safe risks to benefit young people.

The management of the home fully demonstrates that young people are at the centre of the work taking place. The young people confirm that their manager regularly asks them what their views are during his own monitoring of the home, ensuring that they have their say. This further helps to build on young people's resilience and self-esteem. Monitoring reports are sent to Ofsted. However, these reports do not show that young people are consulted about the care they receive.

The staff are extremely clear that contacts for the young people with their friends and family are crucial to their development and future support in their adult life. Staff continue to support contact visits well. However, they have not received formal training for this as is set out in the national minimum standards.

Staff feel very involved in the running of the home and are in particular, pleased with the improvements made to the independence training for young people. They report that the use of holiday accommodation has ensured that young people have further opportunities to plan for their own food, activities and budgeting. This helps young people to be as prepared as possible for their life as an adult.

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
31 (2001)	provide for persons working at the children's home sleeping accommodation where the provision of such accommodation is needed in connection with the work at the home (Regulation 31 (10) (b))	04/04/2012
33 (2001)	ensure that the person carrying out the regulation 33 visit interviews, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there. (Regulation 33,(4),(a))	04/04/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the children's home has a clear Statement of Purpose which is available to and understood by staff and children and reflected in any policies, procedures and guidance. It is available to the responsible authority and any parent or person with parental responsibility (National Minimum Standard 13:1)
- ensure that the children's guide includes a summary of what the home sets out to do for children, how they can find out their rights, how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors, and how to secure access to an independent advocate (National Minimum Standard 13.5)
- ensure that staff have appropriate training, supervision and support if they are required to supervise and facilitate contact (National Minimum Standard 9.2)

- ensure that the development plan identifies any planned changes in the operation or resources of the home. (National Minimum Standard 15.2)