

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	01/02/2013
Inspector	Shaun Common
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Date of last inspection	13/06/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is provided by a private company and is registered to care for four young people with emotional or behavioural 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 **good progress**.

At the last inspection in June 2012, the overall effectiveness rating was judged inadequate. Fifteen statutory requirements and 11 recommendations were made following the last inspection. All statutory requirements and recommendations have been fully addressed. One new area for improvement has been raised as part of this inspection.

The home has reviewed and revised the Statement of Purpose and children's guide. Both these documents are now accurate and contain a range of good information for young people, their parents, placing authorities and others. The revised children's guide has been provided to young people living at the home. A manager has been appointed to the home and was recently registered by Ofsted. This ensures that the home has a suitable manager to lead staff in delivering appropriate care to young people.

The record of physical restraint has been reviewed and revised. It now contains all required matters including a record of how staff try to avoid the need to use physical intervention. This improvement ensures young people's rights and well-being are promoted and safeguarded. The home now supports young people effectively to

attend school and use educational facilities. Staff carefully plan for young people's future needs including further education or employment and support them well to develop skills for adulthood. The home now provides young people with a suitable range of activities that they can engage in and enjoy, such as boxing, karting, swimming and going to the cinema.

There have been no complaints since the last inspection. However, the Registered Manager has revised the format for recording complaints that demonstrates a more detailed and thorough approach. The manager has provided Ofsted with a detailed summary of previous complaints and how these were managed. This has enabled Ofsted to assess that the home investigates complaints thoroughly and ensures any complaint is taken seriously and is fully addressed.

New staff have been recruited since the last inspection. Records demonstrate that all required information is gathered and assessed before anyone starts work at the home. This ensures that the right people are employed to work with vulnerable children. However, although there is a process to assess the suitability of an application in the light of any criminal convictions or other concerns, this process is not fully recorded or supported by a formal procedure. Young people's files now contain all required matters. Records of any missing from care episodes and full health information is now available. This ensures young people can understand their care and history when they access these files.

Independent visitors to the home now ensure that they consult children, parents, relatives and staff in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided. They also check relevant records and assess staff practice, evaluating the quality of care and identifying any shortfalls for action by the Registered Manager. For example, they check complaints and physical interventions. Reports are routinely sent to Ofsted and demonstrate a more robust approach to the monitoring of the care provided to young people in order to improve outcomes. Young people's meetings are recorded accurately. They show that young people are encouraged to give their views on their care and the running of the home. Staff have improved the recording of these meetings by ensuring that young people receive formal feedback about matters they raise and this is detailed in the minutes. This ensures young people feel listened to and valued.

Staff have developed their skills and understanding in developing and sustaining consistent positive relationships with all young people accommodated. They have had training in behavioural issues, such as in conflict styles and resolution. This includes effective communication and supports staff to positively engage with young people, providing them with effective care and support. The Registered Manager has had regular discussions with staff in staff meetings and through formal supervision about the importance of relationships and consistency in behaviour management. Where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, young people are now encouraged to have their views recorded and to sign the record. All records seen show young people are afforded this opportunity. This improvement assists young people to develop understanding and responsibility and also promotes their rights.

The home has a copy of the statutory guidance for children who run away or go missing from home or care. Records at the home have been revised and improved and contain more detail, demonstrating the action that is taken to keep young people safe. The records show that the statutory guidance is utilised and implemented to improve safeguards for young people. There are now clear plans in place to help and support young people to develop skills for adulthood and independent living. The home works with placing authorities to ensure a pathway plan is in place and that these are kept up to date and are reviewed with young people. The home has a comprehensive work pack so keyworkers can assist young people to develop the necessary skills for adult life.

The home has devised a written development plan. This sets out the status of the home and areas where the Registered Manager plans to make further improvements to benefit young people. Each young person now has a clear and comprehensive care plan that sets out the day-to-day needs and how these needs will be met. Keyworkers monitor the care plan ensuring it is kept up-to-date and reviewed as necessary. They also share the content of care plans with young people who have the opportunity to contribute their views and wishes. Young people sign care plans to indicate they have seen them, understand them and are happy with their content.

Since the last inspection, progress has been made in other areas that enhances the quality of care provided to young people and promotes positive outcomes. A room at the home has been redesigned to include more activity and fitness equipment, such as a table tennis table and exercise bike. This enables young people to be engaged more in activities and fitness in the home to promote their enjoyment and wellbeing. The home has also purchased a new computer for young people. This assists them with their education, so they can progress and achieve their potential.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is an effective system for reaching decisions as to who is to be appointed and the circumstances in which an application should be refused in the light of any criminal convictions or other concerns about suitability that are declared or discovered through the recruitment process; specifically, ensure there is a formal procedure in place for this process and records demonstrate the decision made and how any decision was reached in any assessment of suitability. (NMS 16.5)

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*.