

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	28/09/2011
Inspector	Linda Brown
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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 provides three placements for young people of both sexes between the ages of 13 years to 17 years. It aims to provide a nurturing environment in which to develop and prepare young people for a return to family; foster care or independent living.

Progress

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

At the last inspection in July 2011, the overall quality rating for the service was judged as inadequate with 15 requirements and 16 recommendations made.

Action has been taken to address 13 of the requirements and 15 recommendations. Two actions regarding recruitment and staffing and one recommendation regarding the children's advocacy service remain unmet.

Requirements and recommendations were made with regard to the matching process and placement planning. A new system for referrals has been implemented to ensure that all aspects of the placement are considered, to include the impact on other young people living at the home. Planning meetings are arranged within 72 hours of admission. Placement plans are completed and information is sort from professionals, family and young people who are fully included and consulted in making plans for their future. Staff are aware of the contents of the plans and there is a consistent approach to their implementation. Pathway plans are not available, however, a looked after children review is planned in October to address this.

The acting manager and responsible individual have consulted with the local police to address the shortfalls raised in the previous report regarding behaviour management and missing person's procedure. Good relationships have been formed with the local police who keep regular contact with the home for advice and support. The missing person's policy now reflects the runaway and missing from home and care (RMFHC) protocols in line with the police and local authority.

Information for staff, including the ten point check list regarding police intervention in the home, is displayed in the office. Staff demonstrate a knowledge of these procedures and the acting manager is in the process of updating the policy to include the check list. There are no incidents of physical interventions, however, staff have completed the appropriate intervention and de-escalation training and systems are in place to maintain a written record. Reward systems are now in place to encourage and support positive behaviour. Young people are supported and encouraged to behave well and this practice has significantly reduced the use of sanctions.

Appropriate records are maintained of any sanctions given. Sanctions are used appropriately and records are monitored by the acting manager and responsible individual. However, records do not always reflect the effectiveness and consequences of the sanction.

Young people confirm that they are attending college and thoroughly enjoying their courses. Young people also confirm that staff encourage them to attend some of the staff training to develop their curriculum vitae. They stated that they had recently gained their food hygiene and health and safety certificates. Links are now established with a range of education support services, such as, Connexions, the youth offending team (YOT) and colleges. The responsible individual is aware of the services of the local looked after children education support (LACES) team but has not required their input with the young people currently living at the home.

Young people confirm that they are involved in a range of leisure activities to include days out to theme parks, cinema trips, bowling and gym memberships. They also enjoy going shopping with staff. Individual interests are supported. Staff state that young people are on waiting lists to join clubs that are of particular interest to them.

All staff have attended medication and first aid training. New systems have been implemented to ensure the safe storage, administration and disposal of medication. Consent is sought for the use of home remedies.

Action was taken immediately after the previous inspection to address the requirements regarding training and supervision. All staff have completed safe guarding, physical intervention, health and safety, first aid, basic food hygiene and medication training. As this is a new service all staff are currently completing their children's workforce development council's (CWDC) induction standards. Staff that do not currently hold the national vocational qualification (NVQ) in care have enrolled on level 2 of the children and young people's workforce diploma (CYWD) which will commence on completion of the induction. The acting manager is currently completing her level 5 diploma in management. Systems are now in place to ensure that all staff, to include the acting manager and agency staff, are provided with regular supervision.

The responsible individual completes regular monitoring in line with regulation 33 and copies of these reports are sent to Ofsted. The acting manager is now completing her own monitoring to assess the quality of the service provided to young people. Discussion with the responsible individual confirmed their intention to further develop and improve the monitoring of the service, to include setting actions and timescales for completion. Although, systems are now in place to monitor the home they do not provide robust checks, for example, shortfalls in recruitment practice are not identified through the monitoring systems in place at the home.

Since the last inspection the management and staff have worked hard to ensure that young people are consulted about their futures. Regular young people's meetings take place as well as key worker sessions and involvement in meetings and placement planning. Young people confirm that they are given several opportunities to take an active role in the decisions being made about their lives, as well as in the

day to day living at the home.

In order to address the recommendation made at the previous inspection the acting manager has implemented several different risk assessments to cover a range of areas, such as, missing persons, bullying and behaviour. Risk assessments are also covered in young people's care plans. There are some detailed and informative risk assessments in place, however, some are more generic and not relevant to the individual young person. The duplication of the information has resulted in some inaccuracies between documents which provide confusing guidance for staff.

Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff. There is a relaxed, family atmosphere in the home where staff and young people enjoy each other's company. Young people speak really positively of their experiences at the home and the relationship they have with staff. Significant improvements have been made at the home and staff report the consistent and good working relationship that is now established within the staff team.

Two requirements were made at the previous inspection with regard to staff recruitment, suitability, sufficiency and competence of staff. Contact has been made with a local agency to ensure that staff are available to cover any shortfalls in the staffing and recruitment is also taking place.

Due to changes within the group of young people a decision was made that at times staff are able to lone work. Staff are confident that the responsible individual, acting manager or senior staff would be available if assistance is required. However, there is no policy at the home for lone working or guidance to follow in the event of an incident. On further examination of the staff rotas it is noted that staff who are currently completing their inductions to the home are being left to lead shifts and lone work. Safe recruitment procedures are not being followed, records examined show some staff working at the home have not been appropriately checked and vetted. Although, it is evident that progress has taken place to address the majority of the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection which has resulted in a improved service with positive outcomes for young people. However, the recruitment practice and staff working arrangements at the home do not protect and safeguard vulnerable young people. The responsible individual took immediate action and removed staff working at the home until all appropriate checks are in place.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
26 (2001)	ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to each member of staff in respect of the matters	17/10/2011

	specified in Schedule 2, with particular regard to written references and Criminal Record Bureau checks (Regulation 26 (3)(d))	
25 (2001)	ensure that there are a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the home, with particular regard to staff leading shifts when completing induction and probationary periods (Regulation 25 (1))	17/10/2011
33 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6. (Regulation 34 (1)(a))	17/10/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that where there is only one member of staff on duty at any one time, a risk assessment has been carried out and recorded in writing, identifying any likely risks to children, staff and members of the public (NMS 17.9)
- ensure that risk assessments are carried out to identify any potential sources of harm to the children and are recorded in writing and regularly reviewed with particular regard to the accuracy of the risk assessment in place (NMS 10.8)
- ensure that children are assisted to obtain the support of an independent advocate to help them in providing their views, wishes and feelings to statutory reviews (NMS 25.7)