

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	22/01/2013
Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	30/08/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a local authority managed children's home which provides care and accommodation for two 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 **inadequate progress**.

At the last inspection in August 2012 the overall quality rating for the service was judged as good; three requirements and two recommendations were made. Two requirements made regarding sanctions and notifications have been addressed. However, the requirement regarding medication practices has not been fully addressed. The two recommendations regarding care plans and the home's development plan have not been addressed. This has therefore resulted in one of the previous recommendations being escalated to a requirement and a further recommendation being repeated. The home has made inadequate progress since the last inspection.

Temporary management arrangements have been recently implemented. An acting manager started working at the home at the beginning of January 2013. The manager is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

Medication practices including recording systems have been reviewed to address the shortfalls identified at the full inspection. However, practices have not been fully and consistently implemented. Records show that medication is not always given as

prescribed and explanations for this have not been recorded. Although there is no evidence that this has negatively impacted on young people's health, this potentially places young people at risk of harm. The requirement made at the full inspection has been repeated. Furthermore, there is no documentary evidence that these shortfalls have been identified as part of the home's internal monitoring systems.

Young people receive individualised care which takes into account their cultural background and personal identity including their age, gender, religion, ethnicity and their sexual orientation. Young people each have a care plan (known as a residential action plan) which gives details of their needs and how to meet them. However, care plans do not always include information about health conditions and prescribed medication. There is no evidence to suggest that this has affected the outcomes for young people. However, there exists a potential for not fully meeting the health needs of young people.

Young people are actively encouraged to attend their review meetings, which enables them to have a say in their future plans. This helps young people feel listened to and valued. Staff produce a report for all statutory reviews which informs relevant people of the progress made by young people and their current needs. Staff who attend the meetings give feedback, as an interim measure, to the staff team about the recommendations made. However, minutes of statutory reviews held are not always in the young person's file. Furthermore, there is no documentary evidence to demonstrate that staff have contacted the independent reviewing officer to obtain a copy of the minutes. This has the potential to affect the implementation of recommendations made.

Young people continue to make good progress in some areas given their starting points. Young people are very happy and settled at the home. They feel safe and get on well together. One young person said 'I love it here. It's comfortable and it's my home'. Good relationships between young people and staff enable young people to raise any concerns or worries they may have. This helps to protect them from the risk of harm. Additionally, young people really do feel listened to and valued which helps to improve their self-esteem.

Young people have made good progress in reducing their risk-taking behaviour which improves their safety. The number of incidents of young people going missing and staying out overnight has significantly reduced given their starting points. This is because they feel settled at the home and are learning how to keep themselves safe. Additionally, this is because staff have supported young people in increasing their contact arrangements with their families.

Some young people are making very good progress with their education; their attendance is very good. Staff are actively supporting them both practically and emotionally to achieve their academic potential. Consequently, some young people have high hopes and aspirations about their future. However, some young people who have refused to attend their mainstream school, have not received any form of education for almost a school term. There is no documentary evidence to support staff taking robust action to ensure young people receive education based on their

individual needs. Furthermore, staff have not provided any form of education in the home during this period. As a result, the opportunities for some young people to reach their academic potential and gain the necessary qualifications to move on to further training or employment, are being reduced.

Regular meetings with the neighbours seek to address any concerns and further enhance community relations. Three complaints have been received from neighbours since the last inspection about the level of noise. Records show that the complaints were responded to. However, records do not give clear details of actions taken by the Registered Manager to investigate the complaints and the outcome.

Internal monitoring systems are not always robust in identifying shortfalls in practice. Monthly checks are undertaken by the Registered Manager and reports produced. However, these have not identified some of the shortfalls found during this inspection. For example, poor medication practices and statutory review meeting minutes not being obtained and placed on young people's files. As a result, these systems do not fully protect young people from the risk of harm and ensure that their needs are being met.

Monthly monitoring visits are undertaken by representatives of the local authority as required and reports produced. However, since the last full inspection none of the visits have taken place when young people have been at home. There is no evidence to support that alternative methods have been made to try and contact young people. Therefore, young people's views have not been taken into account about the care they receive and the running of the home.

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
21 (2001)	make suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of any medicines received (Regulation 21 (1))	22/02/2013
11 (2001)	promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated. With specific reference to ensuring children's care plans include details of all health needs (Regulation 11 (1) (a))	22/02/2013
18 (2001)	promote the educational achievement of children accommodated in a children's home (Regulation 18 (1))	22/02/2013
24 (2001)	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation (Regulation 24 (5))	28/02/2013

33 (2001)	shall interview with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	28/02/2013
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall establish and maintain a system for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. (Regulation 34(1)(b))	28/02/2013

Recommendations

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

- record in the home's development plan when it is reviewed, any new objectives and any identified barriers to meeting objectives (NMS 15.2)
- take action to ensure minutes of children's statutory review meetings are obtained and retained on file in a timely manner. (NMS 25)

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*.