

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	08/01/2013
Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	13/09/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by the local authority.

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 full inspection in September 2012, the overall quality rating for the service was judged as inadequate. 11 requirements were made regarding the provision of care, behaviour management and the management of the home.

A monitoring visit was undertaken on 25 October 2012 which identified that there had been significant improvements in the management of the home. The home has continued to make improvements and has made good progress since the full inspection. The home has addressed all the requirements and recommendations made at the previous inspection. This reflects the Registered Manager's and staff's commitment to improving the home.

The Registered Manager has demonstrated significant improvement in the management of the home. Consequently, there have been improvements in the quality of care, safety and outcomes for young people. Staff have also benefited from the introduction of new systems and additional support, which have been effective in focusing on current issues, practices and staff developmental needs.

The Registered Manager discussed the findings of the full inspection in detail with the staff team. This ensured that all staff were aware of the shortfalls, the areas needed for improvement and what was required of them. A number of new systems have been introduced which ensure that staff practice is in line with policies, procedures, national minimum standards and legislation. These include regular, more focused staff meetings, forms which ensure that all relevant information is recorded and weekly senior team meetings. These have been instrumental in enabling staff to meet the requirements of the full inspection. This has resulted in improved outcomes for young people.

Staff discuss young people's well-being and behaviour in their team meetings, feedback is given from the local authority representatives' visits to the home and also from the Registered Manager's monthly monitoring checks. Staff now routinely reflect on their behaviour management practices and look at outcomes for young people as well. This helps to ensure that staff work consistently with young people and in line with policies and procedures. Consequently, young people are clearer about boundaries and as a result, have made progress in changing their behaviours.

Internal monitoring systems are now much more robust in identifying shortfalls in practice. Where shortfalls are identified, the Registered Manager takes prompt action to address these with staff. The home's senior duty officer has instigated and implemented a review of the filing system. As a result, information is now easy to access and there is a clear audit trail of events. This helps to ensure that staff are working in line with young people's current needs and procedures. Furthermore, it makes it easier for the Registered Manager to monitor practices; for example, to ensure that information is recorded accurately. Additionally, staff have become more vigilant in checking records, including minutes of statutory reviews. They have taken action to address any inaccuracies. For example, some information in the minutes of one statutory review was inaccurate and the staff member contacted the independent reviewing officer to request that the minutes be amended. This robust monitoring helps to ensure that future planning for young people is based on their actual current needs.

Representatives of the local authority undertake and report on their monthly monitoring visits. These reports demonstrate that careful scrutiny has been given to issues identified at the full inspection. This helps to further promote the well-being of young people.

Practice is now in line with the home's Statement of Purpose. For example, the management of complaints and behaviour now complies with the home's policies and procedures.

Improvements have been made to the management of complaints, including the recording of complaints. Detailed records are now kept of investigations undertaken. The outcome letter to young people has been amended to include details of what they can do if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation. These improvements help young people feel listened to, as well as protecting them from the risk of harm and abuse.

The system for notifying appropriate authorities of all significant events relating to the protection of young people living at the home has been improved. As a result, staff are clearer about when and who to notify. The Registered Manager monitors that practice is in line with legislation, which in turn helps to protect young people from the risk of harm. Ofsted have also been notified of events in a timely manner.

Young people say that relationships with each other have improved since the last inspection. As a result, young people are spending more time in the home. This helps to ensure they are getting the support they need to move into independent living. Young people are learning and starting to take responsibility for their actions and recognise the impact their behaviours have on others. This is because staff have worked tenaciously with young people to help them try and change some of their socially unacceptable behaviours, including bullying. As a result, young people feel safer living at the home. The atmosphere in the home is more relaxed and situations are less volatile.

Staff have continued to advocate for young people to access mental health services in order to ensure young people's needs are accurately assessed. Appropriate assessments are now being undertaken for some young people. Although there had been delays in these assessments being started, staff have continued to work in the best way possible with young people who present extreme challenging behaviours.

This is a home where staff do not give up on young people. As a result, since the full inspection, young people have made good progress in changing some of their difficult behaviours, given their starting points. Individual behaviour management plans are now produced when required. This helps to promote consistent practice and helps to ensure young people are clear about what is acceptable. Additionally, reward schemes based on individual needs and levels of understanding are set up where appropriate. These have helped young people to focus on certain targets and have helped them recognise and be proud of their achievements. The number of incidents of socially unacceptable behaviour have reduced; for example, physical aggression to staff; bullying of peers and damage to property. This has also resulted in a reduction in the number of times the police are called to the home. The commitment of the staff team and progress made by young people has been recognised by social workers and other relevant people.

Progress is further evident in that there have been no incidents of physical restraint since the last inspection. However, staff have been reminded and provided with guidance on the recording of restraints. This helps to ensure incidents are recorded in a timely manner and gives the Registered Manager a better overview to assess if restraint is safe and appropriate.

Improvements have been made to the use and management review of sanctions. Staff think more creatively about what sanctions may be effective. They do not rely on final reparations, which in the past have left young people with very little money to spend, which could have been counter-productive. Consequently, sanctions are appropriate and more effective, which helps young people change their unacceptable

behaviours.

The number of complaints from neighbours about young people's behaviour has reduced significantly. This reflects the improvements in young people's behaviours. Furthermore, the Registered Manager responds to any concerns raised by neighbours promptly, which helps to improve community relationships and outcomes for young people.

Some young people are now starting to engage with care staff and other professionals appropriately. As a result, young people are able to have their health and social needs met, as well as having different opportunities and experiences. For example, some young people are now going to the gym regularly, which they really enjoy. This is testament to the staff team, who have worked tenaciously to make a difference to young people's lives.

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*.