

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC429011
Inspection date	22/02/2012
Inspector	Maire Atherton
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	02/08/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The service is run by a national provider. The home is registered to provide medium- to long-term care for up to three young people of either sex with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Young people living in the home attend a school also run by the national provider and have access to in-house therapeutic support.

The registered provider bases its practices on the integration of home, education and therapeutic services working together to meet the needs of the child.

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 **satisfactory** progress.

The overall effectiveness of this service was judged satisfactory at the full inspection in August 2011. The home has addressed three of the four requirements and four of the five recommendations that were made in the last report. Since the last inspection the Registered Manager has resigned. The interim management arrangements have been properly notified as they have changed. The most recent appointment to the acting manager role, just one week before this visit, is from within the staff team with clearly defined external management support in place. The company is actively recruiting to appoint to the post of Registered Manager.

It was not possible to see full staff recruitment records on this occasion as they are held at the organisation's head office. The records of staff that are required to be kept in house are not complete, lacking full details of experience and qualifications in

some cases and so failing to evidence that young people are cared for by a qualified and experienced staff team.

All interior door locks have been reviewed and changes made where necessary to ensure that they can be opened from the outside in the event of an emergency. Risk assessments have been updated and cross reference appropriately with placement plans thus promoting the safety of young people.

Improvements to records have been made in that the central record of accidents is available in the home and an accurate record is now maintained of the actual rosters worked. Young people's records have also been improved in that up- to-date placement plans are available and health care plans are accurate. This provides staff with the information they need to effectively promote the health and welfare of young people in their care. At the last inspection staff reported that they needed additional IT equipment to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in respect of recording. Although there is no additional equipment, staff report that this is no longer an issue as they have developed more efficient ways of working.

An impact risk assessment form has been developed as a tool to assist the management team with the decision-making process for new referrals. The age, needs, behavioural issues and other considerations of the young person being referred are mapped against those of the young people already resident. This helps ensure that the placement is suitable for the young person being referred and remains suitable for those already resident.

The changes of manager has meant that supervision and staff meetings have been irregular, thus not providing staff with formal guidance and support to fulfil their roles. This is of particular significance to those new staff who have not had a full induction and associated training. The staff team describe each other as supportive and welcome the appointment to the post acting manager someone from within the team. The acting manager is working on a structure for both supervision and staff meetings.

The small core staff team have been supplemented by staff from within the organisation and agency staff. There has been some very recent restructuring within the organisation to increase the number of core staff in order to provide more consistent staffing. January was a particularly unsettled month and this is reflected by an increase in serious incidents in the home. One incident record reflects poor staff practice as a trigger for a significant incident and is also unclear about any restraint that may have been used. Young people are not always clear of the amount to be repaid when a sanction for reparation has been made. One young person said that sanctions are being negotiated with the acting manager with a view to making them more relevant and effective. Although there has been monthly monitoring of records throughout the management changes, there has been limited evaluation which is required to drive improvement.

At the time of this visit there had been a short period of calm. Young people and their parents speak very highly of the work of the staff team; the acting manager is

singled out for his role and the contribution he has made. A parent said 'I admire their work, they are doing wonderfully. My child has come on in leaps and bounds with staff help and I can see an improvement in behaviour.' Young people say they feel listened to and give examples of what has happened as a result of what they have said, such as a change of key worker. Young people say of staff 'they can read me like a book', 'most are on the same wavelength', 'they are trying to help me manage my behaviour and feelings' and 'they care for me and want me to do well.' Although young people recognise that staff want the best for them, they do not always work with staff to achieve this for themselves, by refusing to attend school for example. Staff are developing strategies to address this issue in conjunction with the school.

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
29 (2001)	ensure that the staff records are maintained in accordance with Regulation 29(1) Schedule (4)(2)	30/04/2012
34 (2001)	supply to the HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted by him for the purposes of monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6. (Regulation 34 (2))	31/05/2012
17A (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in the home a written record is made which includes all the matters outlined in Regulation 17 (3)	30/03/2012
27 (2001)	ensure that all staff receive appropriate training. (Regulation 27 (4)(a))	30/04/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff are supported and guided to fulfil their roles. (NMS19)

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)*.