

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC384018
Inspection date	05/01/2012
Inspector	Joanna Heller
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	10/05/2011
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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

This children's home is privately owned. It is registered to accommodate four young people of either sex aged from 12 to 17 years. The home engages the service of a psychologist and an art therapist. Four young people live at the home, all of whom were involved in the inspection.

Progress

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

This unannounced interim inspection looked at the progress made since the last key inspection in May. At the previous inspection the home was rated as good, and one requirement and two recommendations were set. The home has addressed both the requirements and recommendations set at the previous inspection. These related to maintaining the security of the young people's files, developing care plans which fully reflect young people's diverse needs and ensuring that the Statement of Purpose includes the contact details of Ofsted.

The home has undergone some decorative improvements with a full refurbishment of the kitchen which has the effect of providing young people with a much-improved area to chat and prepare meals. Young people are involved in plans which are also underway to redecorate the lounge area. The fire safety system has been upgraded throughout the home, providing additional safety for young people and staff. The office has new cupboards where files are stored so that they can no longer be viewed by visitors to the property via the front window.

Young people now have comprehensive person-centred care plans which detail the support needs and strengths of each of the young people. These detail strategies of how staff will support young people to achieve positive outcomes. Detailed behaviour management plans are in place and are reviewed regularly. Young people are able to earn extra money each week through the 'pathfinder' behaviour reward programme. Young people are able to earn additional rewards of their choice in recognition of particularly positive behaviour and achievements. Young people who go missing are notified to the appropriate agencies in line with local guidelines and staff have regular discussions with young people about maintaining their personal safety. Keyworking sessions also regularly take place around issues, such as personal relationships and education. These meetings, as well as the therapy meetings with the home's psychologist, provide valuable opportunities for young people to explore their feelings and goals. This has a positive impact on young people social and emotional development.

Young people are able to maintain relationships that are important to them, such as

friendships and family relationships. Staff support young people and their families through the difficulties this can bring and are sensitive that certain times of the year can increase young people's feelings of rejection and loss.

All young people are enrolled in some form of education. Three young people have good school and college attendance and are progressing well. One young person spoke of their growth in confidence and their pleasure at being able to maintain regular attendance in a formal educational setting. This was something they had hoped for but had thought last year would not be achievable. Where young people are not successfully managing education in a school setting, staff ensure that they provide extra support and have secured one-to-one tutoring for some time each week. The manager continues to liaise with the educational authorities to secure an appropriate educational alternative of the young person's choice.

Young people generally said they enjoyed living at the home. One spoke very positively about the impact that staff continue to have in their life. Another young person raised a number of minor concerns and stated they were not happy with some of the home's arrangements around internet access and the selection of meals. However, staff do offer alternative meals to the main choice of the day.

Staff turnover is low. This means that young people and staff are able to establish and maintain positive relationships and ensures consistency of care. Where new staff have been employed the manager ensures that young people are safeguarded from unsuitable people gaining employment in the home through robust vetting practices. Young people are generally thriving within a stable placement supported by a committed, competent staff team. Staff have successfully worked with some young people enabling them to positively reintegrate into their families. Other young people have successfully moved on into independent accommodation and continue to keep in touch. Staffing levels are good, ensuring that young people and staff have ample time to spend together. Young people have been continuing to enjoy active lifestyles. The

majority of the young people have bicycles, two having received new ones as Christmas presents from the home. Young people enjoy cycling and fishing with staff on a regular basis. One young person has an annual season ticket to see their favourite football team and regularly travels to the games independently. One young person enjoyed an individual holiday to Prague during the summer, a destination which they chose.

The setting is a five bedroom modern detached house on a new housing estate. It is near to shops and other amenities, including a primary and secondary school, and has good transport links. Attached to the house is a room converted from a double garage space into a games/ 'chill out' area. The garden is mainly laid to lawn and provides an adequate space for outdoor play and sports activities.

Some areas for further improvement have been identified as a result of this inspection. Information provided to young people, and their families and placing authorities in the Statement of Purpose is not sufficiently clear as this document fails to detail the age range that the home caters for. The home has good systems in

place for monitoring the day-to-day care provided to the young people, however, fails to have strategic overview of the service ensuring that all stakeholder views are ascertained.

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
34 (2001)	monitor the quality of care in line with Regulation 34, ensuring that a copy of the report is supplied to Ofsted. (Regulation 34 , Schedule 6)	24/02/2012
4 (2001)	ensure the Statement of Purpose includes all the information specified in Schedule 1. In particular, ensure that the age range accommodated by the home is clearly specified. (Regulation 4)	10/02/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that young people understand how their views have been taken into account; in particular, explore with particular young people what their concerns are and explore their understanding of the home's rules and boundaries. (NMS 1)