

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	03/01/2013
Inspector	Debbie Foster
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	23/05/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The children's home is run by a local authority. It is registered to accommodate up to six young people. The home provides long-term residential care to young people with emotional and 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 **satisfactory progress**.

At the last full inspection carried out in May 2012, the home was judged as good. Following this interim inspection the home is judged to have made satisfactory progress. The home has maintained the quality of care and has addressed the majority of recommendations made at the previous inspection. However, despite the provision of well-targeted, determined support from staff, some young people's behaviour has become negative and challenging. This has contributed to a decline in some of their outcomes. The manager is directing the efforts of staff into arresting this decline. Staff are supported to do this through regular supervision and team meetings, where strategies are considered.

Young people's health is now being promoted in accordance with their placement plan and staff are clear about what responsibilities and decisions are delegated to them. Young people's safety continues to be well supported. Staff work more effectively with education providers to maximise each child's achievement and to minimise any underachievement.

There are effective procedures for monitoring the quality of care in the home, including the evaluation of any physical intervention by the provider. These monitoring systems are effective in identifying shortfalls in the home's practices. Matters identified for improvement are, in the main acted upon and, as a result, standards within the home continue to improve.

One recommendation is still to be implemented. This is for a formal written development plan to be compiled which identifies any planned changes in the operation and resources of the service and shows how the service intends to further improve and develop the quality of care for young people.

Notable improvements in outcomes for young people are in their health and education attendance. The staff have worked earnestly to engage young people in education with very good success for some and improvements for others. One young person has been recognised for his improved educational achievements by winning an award. This creates improved life chances particularly, in respect of post 16 education and employment opportunities. There has been progress in re-establishing family contact where relationships have previously broken down.

There have, however, been long-term staff vacancies and hours which are not permanently allocated. Temporary cover has been arranged for some of the vacant hours, including part-time staff covering additional shifts. During this period some young people have been in crisis, presenting more disruptive and challenging behaviour. The current staffing arrangements do not enable positive behaviour management strategies to be consistently implemented to address the issues.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure a written development plan is in place, that identifies the specific changes in the operation and resources of the service, to bring further improvement or development to the quality of care for young people (NMS 15.2)
- ensure the overall number, competence and deployment of staff and number and deployment of staff, both as a staff group and on individual shifts, can fulfil the home's Statement of Purpose and meet the individual needs of all the children resident in the home. (NMS 17.1)

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*.