

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC375540
Inspection date	11/02/2014
Inspector	Debbie Foster
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	29/08/2013
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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 of either gender. The home provides care and accommodation to young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties on a long-term basis.

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**.

This interim inspection focused on the progress made by the home since the last full inspection in July 2012, at which the overall judgement was good. The home is making inadequate progress. This is due to the service not implementing the requirement made at the last inspection and a decline in aspects of the outcomes for young people. This relates to the management of some young people's behaviour in the home.

Professionals say the staff work proactively to support young people in education to attend and attain; support their emotional and mental health needs as well as working with them to keep themselves safe. Staff have built strong links with outside agencies including the police, missing from care and exploitation support teams.

One requirement and a recommendation have not been implemented in full since the last inspection. These relate to the Regulation 33 visitor not routinely consulting with parents and carers during monthly monitoring visits. This does not assist in being able to form and support an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home.

Not all staff references have been checked to assess their suitability by verifying by telephone the written references obtained. Therefore, all available means to support robust safe recruitment checks have not been undertaken to ensure young people are cared for by suitable staff.

Young people are positive about the care they receive overall and say they have very good relationships with the staff, naming particular individuals they would go to with a concern or for help. They say the staff support and assist to help them to keep safe and promote their learning.

A number of young people are working on gaining independence skills in anticipation of leaving care over the six months. Some have gained good skills in cooking; in housekeeping and generally caring for themselves. However, the majority of young people are struggling to budget money well. The staff continue to support them to develop these necessary skills.

For some time the young people have been settled, and have responded well to fair, consistent and clear boundaries. However, recent responses by staff to manage negative behaviour has been ineffective and in some instances, punitive. There have been a number of repetitive sanctions for the miss spending of money. The acting manager's monitoring has not detected that the sanctions used have not been effective to stop the same behaviours reoccurring. Some sanctions have not been recorded as required, and have involved the turning off of the electricity supply to sockets in bedrooms. This has not only affected the young people receiving the sanction but it has impacted on others not involved in the negative behaviour. The kitchen door has been locked at 10.30 at night to stop access for drinks and snacks late into the evening to control behaviour. While young people say staff are fair and explain the rules to them; the sanctions used for some poor behaviour is excessive and unreasonable. As a result, suitable strategies to respond effectively to challenging and poor behaviour are not being implemented by the staff. This is not ensuring that young people are making adequate progress in this area; relating to promoting socially acceptable behaviour to bring further positive outcomes which they will they will benefit from and to support them sufficiently into adulthood.

Action has been taken to implement one recommendation made at the last inspection. The Regulation 33 visitor is scrutinising more how the home supports children to enjoy and achieve. Giving focus on how young people are progressing in education; building on further education and work placements. As a result this is supporting young people to build on their learning which will assist them in the future to access work as young adults.

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
33 (2001)	ensure the person carrying out these visits interviews, with their consent and in private, children accommodated there, their parents and relatives. (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	28/03/2014
17B (2001)	ensure the registered person within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include the details set out in the regulations. In particular a description of the measure used; the effectiveness and any consequence of the use of the measure (Regulation 17B (3) (a-i))	28/03/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure all people working in the home have references checked to assess their suitability, telephone enquiries are made as well as obtaining written references (NMS 16.1)
- ensure that sanctions for poor behaviour are clear, reasonable and not excessive. Staff must be trained to understand how to respond effectively to very challenging behaviour ((Statutory Guidance Volume 5, paragraph 2.88)
- ensure the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all the records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring. In particular the sanction records. (NMS 21.2)

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*.