

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	21/01/2014
Inspector	Sheena Doyle / Graham Robinson
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Secure Unit

Date of last inspection	18/07/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict young people's liberty. Education is provided on site.

The children's home provides two separate units that can accommodate up to 12 young people who are aged between 10 and 17 years. Admission of any young person over the age of 10 but under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

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 inspection in July 2013, the overall effectiveness rating was judged good; no requirements and five recommendations were made. Three of the five recommendations have been addressed in full, with substantial progress being made on two.

At the last inspection, it was recommended that the Registered Manager improve young people's education by developing practical work-related learning that embraces English and mathematics. Links should also be developed between lessons to show young people how their learning is related. It was also recommended that the educational centre celebrate young people's work with displays of on-going and completed work.

Both of these recommendations have been acted on vigorously. For example, displays in the education centre based on ancient Egypt clearly link English, mathematics, geography, art and design, and history. In another area, the display of a 'tremendous tree' linked humanities, achievement, literacy, and mathematics together well.

A number of initiatives are in place to provide young people with external training and work placements to expand their experience of practical work-related learning, such as placements in a local charity shop and riding stables. Links established with a local college are providing young people with a six-week programme designed to help prepare them for work and cover topics such as dealing with difficult situations, and understanding workplace values and practice. Within the education centre, young people can further develop practical skills by working in a 'virtual' shop and learn how to write up orders, and mark the cost of items, thereby applying both English and mathematics.

A recommendation was made at the last inspection that the Registered Manager should ensure that young people have prompt access to specialist mental health services which can meet their complex needs. In addition, a recommendation was made that staff are sufficiently well trained and supported to provide appropriate care to young people with complex health needs, particularly mental health needs. At the last inspection, it was clear that the home now accommodates a greater proportion of young people with increased mental health needs than historically has been the case. While young people's needs were being met, the contract with external specialist mental health support services requires updating, as needs were being met partially through the good will of all staff involved.

Since the last inspection, the home has had the opportunity to participate in a regional comprehensive review of health services undertaken by the Offender Health Services for NHS England. The result of this review is a firm proposal that health services for young people within the home will be funded by the NHS from 1 April 2014. Currently, the local authority funds specialist services, including mental health provision. The Registered Manager has made good use of this review to secure an improved offer of health services for the home including a broader range and volume of mental health services. For example, the number of hours per week provided from mental health specialists, such as a community psychiatric nurse and a consultant psychiatrist, are planned to increase. Work to progress the service level agreement is at an advanced stage and both the Registered Manager and senior managers within the local authority expect new services to be implemented on schedule. However, a final written agreement is yet to be signed by the participating agencies, so this recommendation is repeated.

The recommendation to increase the skills of staff in caring for young people who have complex mental health needs is underway, with a detailed training programme in place, with scheduled attendance by the whole staff team. This takes good account of maintaining sufficient levels of staffing for the home, while the training programme is underway.

The final recommendation at the last inspection was concerned with ensuring that the CCTV records of restraints, bullying and other serious incidents are reviewed by representatives from the local authority, and that these are used to further improve practice. Considerable progress has been made with the Registered Manager dip-sampling incidents each month and reviewing the footage. A good audit trail of this is maintained, with feedback being provided to relevant staff regarding observations of good practice, as well as areas where practice could be improved. The Registered Manager has also used footage as a development tool with teams of staff. For example, footage was viewed by staff of how one team was able to get young people up in the morning and calmly ready for school, compared with a different team who did not achieve this standard, with staff having the opportunity to discuss and consider how to improve their practice. However, external managers do not yet routinely review CCTV footage of incidents which would increase transparency and accountability, although assurances were given to inspectors that this will commence promptly. This recommendation is repeated.

Since the last inspection, the Registered Manager has continued to make a range of improvements in the quality of care and outcomes for young people. Of greatest significance is that, despite the home operating at increasingly full capacity levels, the number and seriousness of physical interventions, single separations and poor behaviour meriting sanctions has declined. Young people are also benefiting from a more stable workforce as staff sickness levels have significantly reduced since July. Young people report better understanding and fairness of the incentive scheme, with the revised scheme benefiting from consultation and input from young people.

Within education, in addition to the improvements identified above, smaller class sizes have been introduced enabling more personalised tuition. Personal tutor groups have also been re-introduced to improve tracking of young people's progress, and morning handover arrangements between care and education staff have been improved with more detailed information-sharing. Hair and beauty lessons are enhanced with input from an external qualified therapist, one young person has been supported to attend rugby training in the community and the home has linked into a county-wide cricket programme. Another young person has been supported to attend external workplaces to further his interest in mechanics.

Young people's safety is being enhanced with the introduction of a six week sexual exploitation course and a knife crime programme. Safeguarding awareness amongst staff has improved via specialist training on sexual exploitation, suicide awareness, 'sexting' and social network training.

Interesting and inclusive ways continue to be found to encourage young people to take care of their own health and be educated about healthy lifestyles and the home has been able to renew its 'Healthy Centre Award'. The home's catering staff continue to innovate and provide an excellent and healthy choice of food, encouraging young people to try new nutritious items. There is strong encouragement for all young people to undertake physical exercise, which is helped by the offer of 'fun ways' of exercising such as Zumba sessions, street dance, and performances within the home. Young women have benefitted from a breast

awareness programme.

Young people are being encouraged to stretch themselves while also contributing to the community via fund-raising activities. Self-esteem is being improved with the introduction of the 'Go Girls!' group for young women. Young people are also being better prepared for life once they leave the home with the introduction of an independent living group.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all staff receive the training and guidance that allows them to provide appropriate care to young people with complex health needs (NMS 6.8)
- ensure that the CCTV records of any use of restraint, episode of bullying, or serious incident are reviewed by representatives of the authority responsible for the establishment, and that these are used to further improve practice within the home. (NMS 23.6)

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*.