

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC052946
Inspection date	26/02/2014
Inspector	Tola Akinde-Hummel
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	21/10/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2014

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is owned and run by a private organisation and provides care and accommodation for five young people with emotional or 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 **good progress**.

The full inspection was completed in October 2013. This was judged as an outstanding service. One recommendation for improvement was made as a result of the inspection.

The home has improved the recording of young people's semi- independence training. This gives clearer information about their areas for development, level of support required from staff and the progress that they have made.

Young people are proud of the increased independence skills they have gained. Some young people are beginning to recognise the benefit of keeping their personal space orderly and taking some responsibility to manage their finances. This in turn acts as a motivator to progress in education and training to gain employment that will allow them to live a more fulfilled life.

Young people make good use of key work and one to one sessions with staff. This serves as an opportunity to discuss challenging issues that they experience in the home or with relatives and friends. Staff make themselves available to help young people resolve conflicts they have with each other as a result of communal living. Young people appreciate the intervention of staff in this respect. Regular resident

meetings are also used as a forum to address issues around the home.

Most young people are engaged in some form of education and training. The staff support young people by ensuring they have the correct equipment and clothing they need to attend and fully participate in their work and study. The staff also maintain good communication with educational establishments to monitor the progress of young people.

Staff assist young people to access employment by helping to identify their interests and seeking vacancies in those areas; complete application forms and practise communication skills in order to secure interviews.

Young people are reminded of the need to remain healthy and adopt a healthy lifestyle. External professionals are identified to assist the staff with delivering this message to young people. One such professional said, ' We receive appropriate referrals from the home. I am confident that the young people are managed and supervised adequately. They are approachable and attend important meetings with the young people and liaise very well.'

Young people are encouraged to take up hobbies. Opportunities are regularly identified for young people to pursue at weekend and during holiday periods. At times young people are reluctant to commit to any activity for long periods of time. Presently, young people are making more use of the gym in the home supervised by members of staff. This improves their fitness and builds relationships with each other.

The majority of young people say they are happy living in the home and describe the benefits of living there. For example; one young person said, 'I am happy being here, doing something creative and learning a new skill. It is soon time to move on and I am learning to look after myself.' Another young person said, ' They help me with my independence training, they trust me more, I am doing a course that has been my dream since childhood.'

One young person is less enthusiastic, feeling they have less freedom and independence.

Observations of young people indicate that they are comfortable there and have respectful relationships with staff. Young people can express their opinion and are encouraged to do this in a constructive calm way.

Records of sanctions show that young people are given the opportunity to comment and in some circumstances negotiate a reduction in the time scale a sanction has been imposed. One young person said, 'Staff handle situations, not always in the way I would like because it is not in my favour, but you can negotiate and they will compromise.'

Records of absence show an increase over the festive period that has since reduced. Staff maintained contact with young people and their professional network during periods of absence and knew their whereabouts. One social work professional said

'The young person has settled down well since being at the home, incidents of missing have reduced significantly and this is very positive. We are happy with the home.'

The home has good relationships with the community police in the area who visit and advise staff and young people as required.

Young people are of the opinion that staff do not treat them all equally and that there is some preferential treatment. Young people compare the amount of attention and 'chances' individuals receive compared to themselves. They explain that they want more clarity around how decisions are made in order for them to fully understand the staff actions. Young people believe that mixed messages are given and this is confusing. When sanctions are given young people gave mixed responses about whether these are fair. This opinion when shared with the registered manager and senior team was taken on board as an area for them to explore and dispel the perception young people have.

Regular monitoring visits are carried out on behalf of the registered provider. These reports are informative and being forwarded to Ofsted more promptly than previously.

The home is well decorated and furnished making the environment comfortable for young people. The home has maintained a high standard of care and support for young people.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children (NMS 3.8)

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*.