

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC046276
Inspector	Paul Taylor
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Secure Unit

Registered person	Devon County Council
Registered person address	County Hall Topsham Road Exeter Devon EX2 4QD
Responsible individual	Andrea Morris
Registered manager	Peter Richard Spearman
Date of last inspection	23/09/2014

Inspection date	24/02/2015
Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged adequate at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

At the last inspection in September 2014 the home was judged to be adequate. Three requirements were made together with four recommendations.

Requirements relating to improving the décor of the home and ensuring risk assessments and young people's care plans are kept up-to-date have been addressed. There has been substantial refurbishment and redecoration of the home since the last inspection and this has led to improved quality of living areas and young people's bedrooms. Additionally, the home is kept clean and tidy and this lends itself to the home being a more welcoming and comfortable environment.

Risk assessments relating to young people are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are up-to-date and contain the most recently agreed strategies to support them during periods of challenging or distressed behaviour. This means that members of staff are aware of how to support the young people and how to manage presented risks in order to promote everyone's safety.

Care plans are also audited by senior members of staff to ensure that they are up-to-date and that information contained in them is relevant to the young person's current situation. As a result planned interventions and support are tailored to meet each young person's presenting needs.

Three out of four recommendations made at the last inspection have also been addressed. Sanctions imposed are now related to the behaviour presented and are also consistently assessed for their effectiveness. There is also continued use of restorative justice where young people have the opportunity to address their behaviour and put right any misbehaviour. For example, meeting with a young person or member of staff that they have offended and apologising face to face or writing letters of apology. This gives young people the chance to explore their

behaviours, develop insight into why they behave in such a manner and to address wrongdoing in a positive manner.

The home's duty roster now clearly records when the acting manager is on-site and who has managerial responsibility for the home in his absence. This means that members of staff know the whereabouts of managers and who they can contact swiftly for support and advice.

The recommendation relating to ensuring that the effectiveness of periods of single separation is fully recorded remains. There are still occasions where the recording of periods of single separation does not include the effectiveness of the measure and how the measure was resolved in order to re integrate the young person back into their peer group. Additionally, the criteria for a young person to remain separated in their room during the period of separation is not clearly recorded in the log maintained for this purpose.

The home's policy on responding to child protection and safeguarding concerns is clear that this should be done within 24 hours. This has not been consistently achieved. On occasions the necessary agencies have not been informed of incidents promptly, the delay sometimes being up to four days after the event. While this has not had an impact on young people's safety, it is a lapse and undermines practice which has otherwise been conscientious and effective. The home's policy does not make it clear how members of staff should escalate concerns if they feel placing authorities and other agencies have not met their responsibilities and responded effectively to concerns raised. This means there is no clear process to follow to ensure a consistent response in the event that a safeguarding concern has not been responded to in a timely manner.

Young people are able to earn later bed times if they attend education based on site. The acting manager is clear that this incentive has led to improved rates of attendance. However, if a young person does not attend education they have a set bedtime. In the case of young people up to 14 years of age it is 8 p.m. For young people over 14 years it is 8.30 p.m. It is unusual for this to occur, nevertheless, it has been implemented on occasions. This is seen to be an unusually early bedtime for young people of these ages.

Young people report good relationships with members of staff. 'They're good, you can have a laugh with them' is a comment made by a young person. Young people are seen to relaxed in around members of staff and to seek out their company and opinions. This leads to an atmosphere where the young people can develop trust in adults caring for them in a home with consistent safe routines and boundaries.

Transition plans for young people are seen to be of a good standard and carefully prepare young people to move on from the home. Visits to their next placement are supported so that the young people know what to expect and where they are going to live. Members of staff provide sensitive and well thought through support for the

young people during this process. This increases the chance of a successful move and enables young people to feel suitably prepared.

The young people have painted a mural in the area next to the visitors and family room. This is of an excellent standard and was completed as part of a project with a visiting artist. This project has not only improved the decor but has also encouraged young people to work as a team and to develop a sense of achievement.

Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict young people's liberty. Education is provided on site.

The children's home can accommodate up to 10 young people aged between 10 and 17 years who are placed by local authorities and subject of Section 25 of The Children Act 1989. Admission of any young person under section 25 of The Children Act 1989 who is over under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/09/2014	Full	adequate
04/02/2014	Interim	good progress
10/10/2013	Full	good
04/12/2012	Interim	good progress

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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
16 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall prepare and implement a written policy which shall in particular provide for the prompt referral to the local authority in whose area the children's home is situated, of any allegations of abuse or neglect affecting any child accommodated in the children's home. (Regulation 16 (2) (b))	27/03/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children's views and feelings are acted upon, in the day to day running of the home and important decisions or changes in the child's life, unless this is contrary to their interests (This is with a view to reviewing the set bed times for the young people) (NMS 1.1)
- ensure that the registered person and staff work effectively in partnership with other agencies concerned with child protection (This is with reference to having a procedure which ensures that local authorities and other relevant agencies are appropriately challenged and meet their responsibilities in a timely manner where there has been a delay in responding to a reported safeguarding concern) (NMS 4.7)
- ensure that records kept for the use of single separation are sufficiently detailed to evidence what actions staff have taken to reintegrate young people and the outcome of any intervention; ensure the intervention is fully evaluated for effectiveness. (NMS 23.13)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information 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 main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.