

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Anthony Kyem
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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 *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is one of a number of children's homes run by a private organisation. This home provides medium- to long-term care for up to four young people of either sex, between the ages of 11 and 17 years.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Young people are making positive progress in relation to their starting points. They receive high-quality care which promotes their needs effectively. Young people benefit from the care and support provided to them by enthusiastic, skilled and capable staff, who identify their needs comprehensively. Young people benefit from personalised care and they receive excellent levels of personal support.

Young people's views and opinions are important to how the home operates and performs. Their views and opinions are taken into account and they are consulted and involved in all aspects of their care. As a result, young people are able to make a positive contribution. Most young people respond exceptionally well to the care and support provided to them, which enables them to form and develop trusting relationships with staff. Others struggle to adjust to the home's rules and boundaries. As a result, young people have mixed views and opinions about living at the home. Young people are looked after safely and they are kept safe and made to feel safe. Young people benefit from continuity of care and this enables their routines to be maintained successfully.

The manager of the home understands the home's strengths and takes action to improve the home's performance to ensure the smooth operations of the home. Consequently, young people benefit from a home that is managed extremely efficiently and effectively.

As a result of this inspection, a small number of requirements and recommendations have been raised to further improve the provision offered. These are in relation to behaviour management, young people's allowances and staff's awareness of young people's plans.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure all staff are familiar with the contents of young people's pathway plans (NMS 12.2)
- ensure that children are helped by staff to achieve their educational goals. This includes providing support, facilities and opportunities as required and in particular relates to encouraging children to take part in school time educational activities in the home (NMS 3)
- consider the options available to plan for and provide residents with a healthy diet, even under circumstances when they return home late (NMS 3.5)
- ensure young people receive a personal allowance appropriate to their age and understanding. (NMS 2.7)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

From their individual starting points, most young people are making considerable progress. Young people receive the support they need to learn and achieve. Young people receive good support to attend school and those of school leaving age are successfully involved in training or employment, to promote their learning and achievement. Home tuition is provided for those unable to attend mainstream education, to promote their educational development, learning and skills.

Young people receive extensive support to develop their emotional resilience. They receive the support they need as individuals and this enables them to make good progress in all areas of their lives. As a result, young people are making continuous progress.

Young people receive the services they need to promote their positive health. All young people are registered with local health services and staff encourage young people to attend their health appointments. They provide young people with good support with any health issues and they encourage young people to lead a healthy lifestyle. Specialist services are sourced for those young people who require these, to promote their emotional and psychological health.

Young people receive good support to keep in contact with their families and friends. This enables young people to sustain their unique identities and build on their valued relationships. Young people are allowed to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development and they receive support, to promote their independence. Eligible care leavers have pathway plans to promote their transition towards adulthood. However, not all staff are familiar with young people's pathway plans, to enable them to support young people to reach their planned levels of independence.

Young people benefit from a range of enjoyable activities which enable them to develop their particular interests. They are well supported to develop their own social networks and friendships. For example, one young person attends a local gymnasium, benefits from having driving lessons, and previously enjoyed horse

riding and stable management. Some young people are reluctant to engage in the home's activities, despite support and encouragement from staff. As a result, not all benefit from these positive opportunities.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **outstanding**.

Most young people benefit from positive relationships with staff. However, some young people are struggling to adjust to the home's rules and boundaries. Consequently, the home and Ofsted have both received a small number of complaints. The home responds to all complaints in an open, fair and transparent way and this ensures young people's concerns are addressed appropriately. Young people know how to make a complaint and they are actively encouraged and supported to do so. As a result, young people's rights are promoted well.

Young people's views, feelings and wishes are taken into consideration to enable them to have a positive influence in the running of the home. There are extensive opportunities for young people to be consulted. As a result, young people are fully involved in all aspects of their care. Staff strive to achieve the best outcomes possible and they are prepared to go the extra mile to help young people and support them. Consequently, young people benefit from individualised support, which promotes their self-confidence, development and growth.

Young people's needs in relation to personal identity and cultural origin are promoted successfully. Equality and diversity is addressed positively both within daily life and through care planning. This ensure young people's diverse needs and their rights to fair and equal treatment are promoted successfully. Young people receive highly-personalised care which takes account of their individual needs. Care plans are completed comprehensively and these are used by staff to meet young people's needs with knowledge and consistency.

The location of the home ensures young people are able to access local places of interest to them. Young people benefit from a home that provides them with good-quality, homely living accommodation. There is a programme of re-decorative repair which ensures young people's positive living standards are maintained successfully.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Young people are actively protected from abuse, neglect, bullying and exploitation. Staff are trained in child protection so they know how to respond to allegations and deal with suspected abuse. As a result, young people are protected from significant harm. Young people are cared for safely and they are kept safe and made to feel safe.

There has been a positive reduction in the numbers of times where young people

have gone missing from the home. Where young people's whereabouts are not known, staff follow agreed protocols to promote their safe return. As a result, young people's welfare and safety is promoted effectively.

The home has developed excellent relationships with the local police. A local Police Community Support Officer, (PCSO) now attends most staff meetings. This promotes effective partnership to keep young people safe and free from crime and disorder. The PCSO says, 'I think they (staff) do an excellent job... I would have to say this is the best children's home I've been to... It's by far the best.'

Bullying is not an issue for young people to be worried about. The home has a zero-tolerance towards bullying. Staff ensure young people are supervised, which enables them to detect and deter all forms of bullying. As a result, young people feel a strong sense of personal safety. Staff are trained in the use of conflict resolution to enable them to deal with challenging behaviour. Risks identified with individual young people are identified clearly. This enables staff to support young people and protect them. The use of restraint is extremely rare. There are clear guidelines in place on the use of restraint, which is only ever used as a last resort to protect young people from accident or injury.

Young people are actively supported to develop socially-acceptable behaviour. There is effective use of incentives and rewards, to praise young people for their individual achievements. The use of rewards for positive behaviour far outweighs the use of sanctions. This demonstrates a positive ethos on working with young people to develop their positive behaviour. However, there are unnecessary restrictions imposed on young people. For example, there are restrictions on the foods offered to young people if they miss the evening meal and the lounge door is locked during school time to encourage young people to attend school. As a result, a requirement is made in respect of both issues as these are judged to be too controlling and unnecessary. Young people also expressed dissatisfaction about the amount of their weekly allowances.

Young people benefit from a safe and homely environment which promotes their health, welfare and safety effectively.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **outstanding**.

Young people benefit from living in a home that is managed efficiently and effectively. The manager of the home exercises strong and effective leadership and they lead staff by good example. As a result, staff remain enthusiastic about their roles and their efforts are channelled effectively. Consequently, excellent team work is evident and young people benefit from clear and consistent boundaries.

The quality of young people's care is regularly monitored. There are comprehensive systems in place to scrutinise the home's performance. As a result, action can be taken to improve the home's performance and raise the standards and quality of

young people's care. The manager makes excellent use of the home's quality assurance systems to promote the smooth and efficient operations of the home. This enables the manager to build on the home's strengths and address areas for potential improvement. In addition, the home has a development plan to promote sustained improvement of the service.

The home has a proven track record of outstanding performance. It has a history of improving young people's outcomes and raising the quality of young people's care. As a result, the home comprehensively meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose.

Young people benefit from the care and support provided to them by a highly-skilled, energetic and enthusiastic staff. Staff are clear about their roles and they remain focussed on improving young people's outcomes. Staff are extremely well supported and they receive high-quality training to enable them to develop their knowledge, professional competence and skills. Most hold a professional qualification and those who are not qualified are currently undertaking appropriate training.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.