

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Anthony Kyem
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people of either sex. The home is one of a small number of children's homes managed and run by the local authority.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people benefit from well planned, highly individualised care that promotes their needs effectively. Young people make good progress across all aspects of their care, development and welfare. Positive use is made of the home's monitoring activities to promote the continuing improvement of young people's care. The manager has a positive understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses which enables them to secure improvement, where necessary. As a result, the quality of young people's care is promoted effectively.

Young people benefit from a strong sense of personal safety. Staff ensure young people are kept safe and they feel safe. Young people benefit from a stable, caring and highly supportive staff group. They have the ability to form constructive relationships with staff and they sustain their positive attachments. As a result, young people trust the adults who support them.

A social worker reports, 'My young person is able to have positive relationships with their key worker.'

Young people are involved in the running of the home; staff treat their views and opinions seriously. This enables young people to make a positive contribution to the running of the home. Young people's views about the home and their relationships with staff are consistently positive.

Young people said, 'I like the staff. The way they look after you; the way they care. They always listen to you whatever you have to say...The food is great and the staff

are ace...I like living here...I have a very strong relationship with staff...I can speak to staff here, but couldn't in other children's homes. Staff are always nice.'

As a result of this inspection there are a small number of recommendations made for the registered person to consider. These relate to: the use of sanctions, reporting significant events to Ofsted, and ensuring the views of young people are a central aspect of the home's monitoring activities.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the use of sanctions are clear, proportionate, reasonable and fair (NMS 3.8)
- consult with young people and staff to ensure their views are taken into account, as part of the home's monitoring activities (NMS 21.1)
- ensure all significant events relating to the protection of young people are notified to all appropriate authorities. (NMS 24.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in developing a positive self-view. They are taught to recognise and value their positive self-attributes, to promote self-esteem and increase their self-confidence. Young people develop their emotional resilience and they receive advice and support, to help them cope with life's challenges. Young people are supported to make sense of their past experiences so they have a knowledge and understanding of their backgrounds and histories.

All young people attend school or alternative provision. They benefit from good school attendance. The educational achievement of young people is good, taking into account, both their progress and attainment at the point of their admission.

Staff have high aspirations of young people. They actively support them to enjoy and achieve. Staff work enthusiastically with young people's schools to ensure their progress is maximised and they achieve their full potential. Young people benefit from personal education plans to promote their needs and aspirations. Their educational needs are promoted effectively.

Staff promote young people's positive health. Young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians. They have access to the services they need to promote their physical, emotional and psychological health. Young people are taught to lead a healthy lifestyle. They develop a positive awareness of relevant health

issues to enable them to make informed choices about their health. Young people make positive lifestyle choices and they take responsibility for their own health and well-being.

Young people's medication is stored and administered safely. Staff are trained to provide young people with emergency treatment, if needed. They know what health responsibilities and decisions are delegated to them. Medical consent for young people is in place.

Young people benefit from contact with their friends and families. This enables them to sustain their positive attachments. Staff support young people with contact, to ensure that contact is a positive experience for them.

Young people's families report, 'Staff keep in touch with me about everything that is going on. All the staff are helpful and friendly. It is a good home...I can talk to staff about the care of my child, as often as I wish. Staff keep me well informed about how my child is doing.'

Young people learn to develop their life skills. They have plans to promote their independence which staff use to monitor their progress and development. Young people are taught skills appropriate to their age and they are allowed to take reasonable risks, as part of their growth and natural development.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from well planned, personalised care that meets their needs comprehensively. Staff involve young people in their plans to ensure they have a positive understanding of them. As a result, young people know what targets and goals they are working towards. The home ensures young people's needs are assessed comprehensively. Plans are well tailored to meet the needs of individual young people.

A social worker reports, 'The staff ensure my child's care plan is followed. Staff have a good understanding of the young person and advocate for her regularly. I feel strongly that staff work effectively with the young person within the constraints of the children's homes regulations.'

Young people's views and opinions are taken into account, to enable their positive contribution to the running the home. Young people's views and opinions are valued and they feel listened too. Young people's needs in relation to positive identity, age, gender and ethnicity, are all positively addressed, both within care planning and daily living. Young people know how to make a complaint and their rights to complain, are promoted effectively.

Young people are encouraged to make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community. They benefit from a positive choice of enjoyable activities. They

develop their social skills and networks, interests and hobbies, as a result of their participation.

The home provides young people with a good standard of homely, high quality living accommodation. Young people's bedrooms are highly personalised in accordance with their needs and wishes. The home reflects young people's needs and characteristics. The location and design of the home promotes young people's health, safety and well-being.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are kept safe and they feel safe. Staff are trained in child protection so they know how to protect young people from abuse, neglect, harassment and exploitation. They know how to deal with allegations and how to respond to suspected abuse. Staff who work with young people are vetted carefully to protect young people from unsuitable people.

Young people are protected from bullying, intimidation and harassment. Staff are vigilant towards bullying and they take positive action to prevent bullying from taking place. Young people who are the victims of bullying receive support and reassurance to enable them to be safe and feel safe.

There are no issues with young people placing themselves, or other young people at risk of significant harm. Young people do not engage in high risk taking activities. Young people's positive behaviour is promoted and good use is made of incentives and rewards, to encourage social acceptable behaviour. Risks associated with young people's behaviours are identified clearly and staff adhere to safe working practices to keep young people safe.

Positive steps are taken to promote young people's safe return, if they are missing. Staff know how to follow the home's joint protocols and procedures for reporting young people missing. There is evidence to show that the number of missing from homes has reduced over time. Staff work with young people's families to ensure unauthorised absences, are minimised.

The majority of sanctions used by staff are fair. However, the use of multiple sanctions and financial reparation to reprimand unacceptable behaviour is not proportionate. Restorative justice is not used to help young people reflect on their negative behaviour. Consequently, young people are not developing the skills they need to repair their own wrong doings to promote their positive behaviour.

Restraint is only used as a last resort. Where restraint has been used, it has been used effectively to keep young people safe. All staff are trained in the use of positive handling to enable them to manage difficult behaviour safely. The home's approach towards behaviour management minimises the need for police involvement. As a result, young people are not criminalised unnecessarily.

The home provides young people with a physically safe and secure environment. All health and safety checks are up to date. Health and safety within the home is managed effectively. There are regular fire drills to ensure young people know how to evacuate the premises safely in the event of fire.

Leadership and management

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

The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose. It continues to operate within the constraints of its registration. There are no requirements or recommendations resulting from the previous inspection. Young people continue to benefit from a home that is managed efficiently and effectively.

The manager communicates high expectations to staff to promote the continuing improvement of the service. They stimulate staffs' enthusiasm and channel their efforts effectively. Sufficient staff are employed to meet the diverse needs of young people. Staff benefit from high quality training and they develop their knowledge and skills as a result. Young people benefit from the care provided to them by well-trained, qualified, skilled and experienced staff.

The home can demonstrate its capacity for continuing improvement, based on its track record and performance since the last inspection. The manager makes positive use of the home's monitoring activities to secure the improvement of young people's care. The quality of young people's care is reviewed and monitored effectively.

The home strives to achieve the best outcomes possible. The manager scrutinises the home's administration relating to the quality of young people's care. This enables them to tackle identified weaknesses effectively. Independent monitoring visits, while undertaken consistently, do not always consider the views of young people and staff. Consequently, their contribution to the decisions reached about the quality of young people's care and the conduct of the home, are not considered or recorded consistently.

Significant events relating to the protection of young people are notified promptly to the responsible authority, so that appropriate action can be taken as a result. However, the home has failed to notify Ofsted of significant events, in accordance with its statutory responsibilities. This is judged not to have had a negative impact on young people. A recommendation is therefore made in respect of this issue.

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* and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.