

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Tola Akinde-Hummel
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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## 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

**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 **outstanding**.

The home provides a superior service to young people. The quality of care is outstanding because the home refuses to allow mediocre support for young people from themselves or their partners. There is continuous effort put into giving young people the best chances in all aspects of health, education and social development. Young people thrive in the caring and nurturing environment that the home provides. One member of staff said, 'the main joy about working here is that I am allowed to have compassion. There is a lovely team spirit here that helps the young people feel they belong to a family.'

Arrangements for safeguarding are outstanding. Partnerships with other agencies are embedded as is the care practice in the home. This provides young people with a much needed sense of security and a more holistic approach to their care. One Social work professional said, 'some young people work hard to be rejected, the home does not support this, they can hang on to and develop young people.'

Outcomes for young people are judged as good. This is because the majority of young people living in the home have been there for less than nine months. They have already made significant progress since their arrival, and are on course to take full advantage of the support on offer and reach their potential with the care, focus and high aspirations the staff team have of them.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Managers lead by example. They fully undertake their responsibilities to young people, their staff team and stakeholders. They drive improvement within the home and contribute to the wider social care

agenda. The staff are well supported and as a result work well together to provide high quality individualised care for young people.

The recommendation arising from this inspection focuses on improving the evidence of young people attaining semi-independence skills.

## 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 children are supported during their transition to their new placement, to independent living or to their parental home, with specific reference to ensuring full evidence of such transition is recorded in their semi-independence plan. (NMS 11.8)

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Children and young people make good progress in the home. They develop insight into their circumstances and work at modifying their behaviour. Young people recognise the importance of boundaries and work hard to follow these. One young person said, 'they know how to deal with me. I am surprised they have put up with me for so long.'

( TOLA AKINDE.HUMMEL: I am comfortable with this quote in the context of the explanation above in overall effectiveness about young people trying to be rejected by services.)

Young people develop excellent relationships with staff and trust them to guide them appropriately. All young people get on with staff and one young person said, 'I know staff care about me and even though you can have jokes with them, they tell you what's what.'

As a result of living in this home, young people access education even though they have been out of the education system prior to their placement. This helps them to realise their aspirations and develop the necessary skills to move forward.

Young people build up their work experience and knowledge base to help them seek employment at a later stage in their life. Young people apply for apprenticeships and part- time work to increase confidence and financial independence.

Young people expand their leisure interests during their time in the home. They participate in stimulating annual holidays, community and structured activities within the home. This improves their relationships with each other and with the staff.

As a result of direct input from staff, young people are more sensitive to the needs of others and willingly participate in fundraising events for a local charity, giving them a

sense of purpose, social responsibility and community spirit.

Young people have reduced their involvement in anti-social behaviour and incidents within the home.

Young people develop the practical skills required to move onto semi-independent living. They do their laundry, cleaning, and some meal preparation, budgeting and shopping. This gives them a sense of their responsibilities when they move on from the home.

## Quality of care

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

Staff have excellent knowledge of the young people in their care and how to meet their presenting needs. This is achieved through high quality individualised care planning, monitoring progress of young people and focusing on the areas for development. Staff address areas of improvement sensitively and in a way that young people can absorb. This enables young people to reflect on their behaviour and try to make changes. One young person said, 'I am a different person now to when I came, They care about you and try to keep you safe.'

Staff treat all young people as individuals whilst taking account of their cultural references in order to understand their needs in more detail. Staff team discussions enable them to share knowledge and find the most appropriate approach to young people to help promote their identity.

Staff work in a consistent way with young people to ensure they understand the purpose of their intervention and the desired outcome. Young people sometimes comment on their own progress during weekly sessions.

Staff build strong, positive relationships with young people. This is done by making themselves available at all times and dedicating specific time on a weekly basis for individual sessions with young people. Young people choose appropriately how they will spend the time with staff during the session. This time is highly valued by young people. This allows young people to develop a rapport with staff other than their keyworkers.

Staff act upon young people's aspirations and identify pathways to enable them to succeed. Staff make it a priority to know young people's interests and build upon these using education and leisure as their main tools. Young people who show an interest in areas such as music, model making, dressage and apprenticeships are directed to pursue these areas. The staff team work with young people to make their desires a reality and remind young people of their aspirations when they are wavering. One parent said, 'The home is very fortunate to have sterling staff on board, they are creative in supporting the young people.'

Staff facilitate health care appointments for young people who are encouraged to take care of their health. Staff liaise extremely well with primary and specialist health services to access the most appropriate health care for young people. One Placements officer said, 'The team do excellent work with young people, emotional and physical health issues are worked through positively. I have received feedback from the professional network about how impressed they are with the home.'

Staff confidently explain the benefit of maintaining good health to young people. One young person said, 'Staff make it hard for you to smoke.' Staff encourage young people to take part in physical activities and young people play tennis and football. The home has a small well equipped gym available for young people to use with supervision.

The home is decorated to a high standard and homely. Young people are comfortable in their environment and are mostly respectful of it. Young people participate in maintaining the cleanliness by completing their chores set out on the rota. All young people know their chores for the week. This is complemented by a very competent housekeeper. Young people work towards developing their independent living skills whilst in some cases this is successful, tracking of their development in practice is good however evidencing this is less consistent. One young person said, 'I now have all the skills to move on but I do not want to leave.'

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

All young people report that they feel safe and well cared for by staff. Staff use their training and the skills they have developed to practice safe caring. The staff have excellent relationships with young peoples' professional networks and report all areas of concern swiftly. One practice manager said, 'the home appropriately safeguards young people. They keep a track of young people who go missing and reduce the incidence.'

Young people watch educational videos, teaching them about consequences associated with risky behaviour and have recently had a training session from a national charity about sexual exploitation. This reinforces messages given by staff about safeguarding and the dangers of being away and not maintaining contact. One young person said, 'they always talk to us about keeping safe, they keep me safe and help me manage my behaviour. This is the best place for me.'

Risk assessments are well written giving an excellent evaluation of young peoples' behaviour history, details of how this will be addressed and the progress they make. The action taken by staff impacts positively on young peoples' behaviour and enables them to apply the changes they have made to other areas of their life. One education professional said, 'the home are consistent with their rules, 'no' is 'no'. They work hard to give rewards and lay emphases not on watching what young people get wrong but watching and praising them when they get it right. They are

not afraid to set the benchmark.'

Careful matching takes place to help promote the best outcomes for all young people living there. Two placing authorities said, 'two of our referrals were turned down due to the behaviour of young people being too similar,' and, 'they are considered decision makers. They are very careful about how they mix the young people.'  
( TOLA AKINDE.HUMMEL: I think this fits well in safeguarding/ risk assessments, minimising risk of harm etc.)

Young people do not experience bullying in the home; conflicts are carefully managed and often raised at resident meetings. This allows staff to remind young people about anti- discriminatory behaviour and the consequences of not adhering to acceptable behaviour and communal living. Young people confirm that the staff handle such issues well and these do not routinely occur.

Young people engage in the reward system set up by the staff and are motivated to achieve even when they have had some setbacks. Sanctions are only given as a last resort and all young people describe these as fair and talk of regretting some of their behaviour. One young person said, 'I deserved the sanction and did not make a fuss when it was given. I also made it up to them.'

Restraints are not used in the home; instead the staff maintain high levels of contact with young people and divert them when situations have the potential to escalate. Strategies include reminding young people about how well they are progressing, or taking them out of the home to calm down and talk about their frustrations.

All health and safety checks are appropriately carried out and fire drills are routinely undertaken.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home's statement of purpose and young person's guide is reflected in practice. The documents are informative and user-friendly. The young person's guide provides additional insight from a young persons' perspective about daily life in the home. Quotes from past and present residents enhance this. These contributions make the guide more relevant to young people.

Excellent management is provided by the Registered Manager and the deputy who are committed to developing the service. They are extremely knowledgeable in this area of work and encourage staff to carry out their roles to a high professional standard.

The staff are motivated to improve the life chances of young people in their care, guided by their managers and seniors. The staff maintains professional relationships with external colleagues and provide exemplary care to young people. One staff member said, 'everyone is conscious about how we treat the young people, suggestions are always taken on board, managers are always there if you feel

overwhelmed and I really do enjoy coming to work.' All stakeholders commented on the high level of professionalism, attention to detail and positive outcomes for young people, delivered in a homely environment.

The staff receive mandatory and specialist training relevant to their role. Team meetings and supervision provide additional support to ensure consistency is maintained across the home. The content and quality of supervision is exceptional providing staff with many opportunities to develop their skills in caring for young people.

Great care is taken by the managers when organising the staff rota to ensure high staffing levels are maintained to meet the needs of the young people. Other members of staff said, 'the partnership between male and female staff provides a very good balance,' and, 'we all bring our strengths to the team, we talk about the challenges and different ways to work with them.'

Staffing ratios in the home are high with contingencies in place on a daily basis should additional support be required. This is outside the established on-call system.

Monthly monitoring reports undertaken on behalf of the provider are informative and support the team to further develop their practice and procedure.

Monitoring is undertaken on a monthly basis by the Registered Manager these are robustly evidenced. They explore emerging trends and address any potential shortfalls in provision. Suggestions to improve the service come from the whole staff team and form part of the homes annual development plan. Progress made is regularly measured and staff discuss this as a group and in individual sessions. The group commitment to improvement is evident in the actions of the staff, and the change in the young people. They benefit from the homes determination to make changes that will improve their experience of living in a home.



## 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 the inspection of children's homes.