

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, run by a company, provides care and accommodation for up to four young people of either sex from 11 to 17 years of age. The purpose of the home is to assist young people to return home, wherever possible, or to prepare young people for their independence.

Overall effectiveness

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

From their individual starting points young people make good progress. They benefit from the support provided to them by dedicated staff. Young people's needs are clearly identified and their placement plans are used by staff to promote their positive outcomes. Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff and the advice and support provided to them. A social worker says, 'X developed excellent, supportive relationships with all staff. He felt supported and liked.'

The views of young people are central to the way the home operates and this enables young people to have a positive influence in how the home is run. As a result, young people can contribute to decisions made within the home and have a say in the decisions made about their care. Young people enjoy living at the home and they feel safe living there.

The home works in partnership with other agencies to ensure young people receive the services they need to promote their safety, positive health, emotional and psychological welfare. Consequently, young people's health, welfare and safety is promoted effectively.

Young people's views about the home are very positive. Young people say, 'its perfect. I couldn't ask for anything better. I like having my own space and we get good support from staff. They help with my budgeting and independence.' Another young person says, 'Its very good living here... This is the only children's home I have enjoyed living in... Staff are very supportive, they're like our friends. I have good relationships with everybody and I would definitely recommend it to other young people. There's not a bad word I can say about it really.'

As a result of this inspection there are a small number of recommendations made. These relate to: improving the arrangements made to store medication safely; implementing pathway plans to support young people with their independence; improving the standards of young people's accommodation and updating the home's Statement of Purpose to include the qualifications of all staff.

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 Statement of Purpose is updated to include staff qualifications and relevant experience (NMS 13.2)
- ensure the children's home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated throughout (NMS 10.3)
- ensure pathway plans are in place for eligible care leavers (NMS 12.2)
- ensure medicines kept within the home are stored safely and are accessible only by those for whom they are intended. (NMS 6.13).

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The home provides a nurturing environment where young people are well supported to reach their full potential. Young people attend school and their educational attendance is actively encouraged. As a result, young people learn and achieve and they make positive educational progress.

Young people of school leaving age are well supported to pursue further education, training or employment to promote their positive outcomes. A school teacher of one young person says, 'I wanted to drop you a line to tell you how well X is doing in class. He has been working to a consistently high standard and we are all delighted with his efforts and achievement.'

Young people are taught to live independently. Some young people are provided with a self-contained bed sit which enables them to experience a higher level of independence. With good support young people learn to develop their life skills, for example, with cooking, shopping and budgeting. As a result, young people become confident, self-sufficient and capable. However, not all young people who are eligible care leavers have plans in place to help them make the successful transition to adulthood.

Young people benefit from the individualised support provided to them which takes account of their needs. From their starting points young people make good progress and their outcomes are improving as a result of the care provided to them. Young people benefit from contact with their families to promote their well-being and support networks for the future.

Young people receive the services they need to promote their physical and emotional health. All are registered with local health services and have access to specialist services to meet their identified needs. There are good arrangements in place for the

safe administration of first aid and medication. However, medication is not stored safely enough as the medication cabinet is not secured to a wall for additional security.

Quality of care

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

Young people's needs are positively identified. They benefit from the care provided to them and they receive good support, in accordance with their needs. Young people's placement plans are written clearly and these are implemented effectively to support young people and promote their positive outcomes.

Young people are supported to make a positive contribution. They are actively involved in decisions made about their care to promote their inclusion and there are good opportunities for young people to be consulted to enable them to influence the running of the home. Young people know how to complain and their complaints and concerns are treated seriously.

Young people benefit from good relationships with staff and they confirm that they are able to turn for staff for support in times of need. Young people enjoy a broad range of activities and they benefit from these social experiences by developing their own interests and hobbies.

Healthy eating is promoted and young people are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle. This enables young people to take responsibility for their own health and well-being. Specialist advice and support is made available to those young people who require it in relation to drugs, sexual health issues and alcohol awareness. Young people are actively discouraged from participating in any activity which is detrimental to their health.

The location of the home ensures young people are able to access local places of interest, such as sports centres and shopping facilities. The home provides young people with a safe environment, which meets the needs and numbers of young people living at the home. The accommodation provided for young people, whilst satisfactory, is looking somewhat tired, dated and worn.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are no current issues with safeguarding or bullying. Young people are kept safe and they are protected from harm. Staff have a good understanding of young people's needs and risks associated with young people's behaviours are clearly identified to enable staff to care for young people safely.

Staff are trained in child protection so they know how to protect young people from abuse, exploitation and significant harm. Staff know what to do should a young

person go missing and they follow agreed protocols to promote their safe return, should young people go missing from the home. Staff are appropriately vetted to ensure those employed to work with young people are safe and suitable to do so.

Young people are actively encouraged to develop socially-acceptable behaviour through incentives and rewards. Unacceptable behaviour is challenged appropriately and sanctions used by staff, are fair. Physical intervention is only ever used as a last resort, to protect young people from accident, injury or harm. Staff are trained in the safe and effective use of care and control to enable them manage young people's difficult behaviours, safely and effectively.

Young people benefit from living in a safe environment, which promotes their safety. There are effective systems in place for the detection and prevention of fire. There are regular safety tests undertaken to the home's fire safety equipment, gas and electrical appliances to ensure young people are protected from potential hazards.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a proven track record and demonstrates that positive improvements have been made since the previous inspection. All recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed.

Young people are encouraged to record their views about the fairness of sanctions used. Their risk assessments have been updated and their placement plans are consistent with those prepared by the placing authority, to promote their positive outcomes. There were no requirements made at the previous inspection.

The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose and it provides young people with a good standard of care. Both the Statement of Purpose and children's guide describe the services provided to young people. This is so that young people, their families and placing authorities are clear about how the home supports young people and cares for them. Both documents meet legal requirements and provide accurate information about the home. However, the Statement of Purpose does not show the numbers of staff who are qualified to work with children.

Young people benefit from a home that is managed efficiently and provides them with a good standard of care. Both the management team and staff group are very experienced and all are well qualified to meet young people's needs. Consequently, young people benefit from the skills of an experienced staff team which is trained and qualified to meet their needs. There is a positive commitment towards staff training and development to enable staff to develop their skills and keep up to date with professional practice.

The manager is clear about the home's strengths and weaknesses. A written development plan has been devised to address areas for potential improvement. The performance of the home is regularly monitored to ensure young people receive the

care and support they need. Reports in relation to the home's conduct are prepared independently and this enables the manager to address, any practice issues raised. As a result, young people benefit from the quality assurance systems used to review and improve the quality of young people's care.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.