

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Seka Graovac
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a privately owned home. The company has two other children's homes registered with Ofsted and some other services that focus on promoting young people's independence. This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and 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 **good**.

The home is effective at providing good quality care to young people. They receive highly personalised support and have their diverse needs fully met. Young people are making good progress across all aspects of their welfare and development. Very positive relationships between staff and young people successfully underpin young people's progress. They behave appropriately and present as polite, kind, friendly and caring young people. They are making good progress in education and have high aspirations for their future. They, their families and social workers value the quality of care provided by the home, exceptionally highly. Young people are particularly positive about the physical environment they live in.

The management is strong and has built positive working relationships with other professionals and services that support young people in the borough. The home focuses very much on promoting and improving outcomes for young people. Staff working practice promotes young people's health, welfare and independence, effectively. The shortfalls relate to the staff appraisals, staff supervision, out of date written information about the service and staff guidance. The leaders and managers are aware of the weaknesses in the service provision. They are taking appropriate steps to improve. A written development plan for the future of the home is being finalised.

Areas for improvement

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
5 (2001)	keep under review and revise the Statement of Purpose so that it provides up to date information (Regulation 5.(a))	20/09/2012
26 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate supervision and appraisal. (Regulation 27.(4)(a))	20/09/2012

Recommendations

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

- the Registered Manager obtains Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children's and Young people's services (NMS 14.2)
- the registered person has a written development plan, reviewed annually for the future of the home (NMS 15.2)
- staff are kept up-to-date with professional and legal developments. (NMS 18.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people enjoy having good health. When they have any health concerns, they know who to turn to for help. Some young people self-medicate, as agreed between them and their doctor. This successfully promotes their independence. They understand what impacts on their health and have developed healthy lifestyles. Some older young people have full responsibility for their food. They understand the importance of eating nutritious and well-balanced meals. They are supported to budget so that they buy good quality food. Engaging in physical exercise and a wide range of other leisure activities also contributes positively to their health and general well-being. Some of the recent activities they enjoyed include horse-riding, going to see a football match and a visit to an adventure park.

Young people have good opportunities to strengthen safe attachments with their families and forge new relationships that are appropriate. Through regular quality time spent together and through telephone calls, they maintain and develop constructive relationships with their families and friends.

Young people know that staff are always there to support them with anything they

need. They are treated as individuals and are given good opportunities to exercise choice. If they wish so, they are supported to attend a place of religious worship.

Young people understand the importance of education. They are making good progress in this area of their lives. Some young people have 100% school attendance rate and are doing really well at school. The others who refused to attend education in the past are now willing to return back to school and achieve better attendance. When young people are excluded from the school, they receive good support from their tutors and from the home to prepare for and take their exams.

Young people have developed positive self-view and confidence in themselves. They have high aspirations, such as to become barristers or sport-photographers. They know what they want from life and what they need to do to achieve what they want. They are keen to contribute to the wider community and have developed altruistic attitudes. For example, a young person wants to earn lots of money so that it can be shared with children who live in poverty.

Young people are preparing effectively for a transition to independence and adult life. The young people who used to live in the home have successfully moved on.

Quality of care

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

Young people are provided with staff support of a consistently high quality. Staff work in strong partnership with other agencies and professionals to ensure positive outcomes for young people. Staff use highly personalised strategies to ensure that young people's individual needs including those relating to their race and cultural background are fully met. The care planning process is effective and involves young people as much as possible.

Staff have dedication and skills to build positive relationships with young people. Young people appreciate being looked after by the staff, who know them really well and whose positive intentions they fully trust. They describe the staff as being really nice and supportive. Even those young people who are not happy to live in a children's home are eager to explain that this particular home is good. Young people are aware of the complaints procedure, but did not feel there was a need to use it.

Young people's views are gathered through regular key-working sessions and by other means, such as residents' meetings and informal chats. Monthly reports that are sent to the placing authority demonstrate the home's significant contribution to the care planning process. Those reports clearly identify individual monthly targets to ensure that young people continue to progress and that their identity is fully supported. Any barriers to their progress are identified and comprehensively addressed.

Staff are proactive in consistently supporting young people's school attendance and educational achievements.

When young people need health advice or treatment, they receive good support from staff to manage this, safely and appropriately.

Staff effectively promote young people's constructive relationships with their families. In agreement with the placing authority, additional services, such as supervised family contact, escort or language interpreter are provided or supported by the home.

Staff have created an open atmosphere which enables young people to talk about their lives including their emotions, relationships and sexuality.

The environment is spacious and very well maintained. Young people appreciate having large rooms and being supported to personalise them in the ways they want. They are given choice and respect. The service is effective at ensuring that young people feel comfortable, well-looked after and valued.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The management works together with other agencies effectively with the aim of promoting the safety of young people. Regular meetings are held with the local police to keep on improving the actions that the home takes when young people are missing or being absent without consent.

Health and safety arrangements are robust and ensure that the physical environment is safe. The arrangements for supervising visitors are secure. Staff are rigorously and thoroughly vetted. The company knows that the staff they employ are suitable to work with children and young people. Staff are effective at promoting young people's welfare.

Regularly reviewed care plans and individual risk assessments clearly identify young people's needs, any risks and protective strategies. Young people receive effective support to understand the safety risks and learn how to keep themselves safe. Staff enable them to take appropriate risks as part of their individual development.

Young people report having developed a strong sense of safety. They say that they have not experienced any form of bullying or intimidation in the home. There have been no major incidents or safeguarding concerns. Staff are trained and skilled at promoting young people's safety and positive behaviours without having to resort to physical interventions. The sanctions are used very sparingly and with great positive impact. Young people understand the importance of behaving constructively and having good social skills. They interact positively with others and behave appropriately. They have developed kind, helpful and friendly attitudes.

Leadership and management

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

An experienced Registered Manager is aiming to complete an appropriate management qualification by June 2013. A deputy manager and a small team of staff are qualified and motivated to consistently increase young people's life chances. The training staff receive enables them to provide good quality care. The staffing levels are maintained at appropriate levels at all times and the management on-call arrangements are good. The home is effectively and efficiently managed with the priority always being given to supporting young people well.

Young people's individual files are well maintained and contribute to a clear understanding of the young people's lives. Monitoring of the young people's progress is thorough and it is proactively used to fine-tune the care and support young people receive. Sharing of information and working in collaboration with other professionals and services that support young people is good. The home is able to demonstrate how young people's lives and their life chances have improved over time.

While the actual management and staff practice at the home is very good, the written guidance has not been comprehensively updated in line with the current legislation. Many policies and procedures still refer to the national minimum standards that were valid until April 2011. The Statement of Purpose still refers to the National Care Standards Commission that ceased existing in 2004. The provider is aware that this is the weakness of the organisation and is currently reviewing all its documentation. For example, an updated policy on safeguarding children has been written. The relevant training is being organised to share the updated information with all staff.

Another weakness relates to formalising and recoding the support available to staff to successfully carry out their professional role. Although staff report being well supported, the minutes of the individual supervision meetings show that either they are infrequent or have not been recorded. Staff appraisals are in progress, but are overdue.

The home has a good track record with Ofsted and no requirements or recommendations were raised at the inspections last year. Staff have continued to support good outcomes for young people, effectively. Monitoring is appropriate and the management is aware of the weaknesses in the service. Appropriate actions are being taken to address them fully. Leaders and managers are in process of finalising a written development plan for the future of the 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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.