

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 from 11 to 17 years of age. The home is registered with Ofsted to provide services to young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Young people receive care on a medium- to long-term basis. The home's primary purpose is to support young people to return home, wherever possible.

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 care that promotes their needs effectively. Their outcomes are promoted positively and they make exceptional progress in relation to their starting points. Young people benefit from highly individualised care that takes account of their feelings, needs and wishes.

Staff involve young people in the running of the home and this enables their positive contribution. Staff are enthusiastic about their roles and they channel their efforts effectively. Young people have positive views about the home and this includes their relationships with staff. Young people receive continuity of care so they can sustain and develop their positive attachments.

Young people enjoy living at the home and they benefit from an excellent standard of care. Young people respect staff and they genuinely value the help and support provided to them. The care provided for young people is underpinned by safe working practices and this ensures young people are kept safe and feel safe.

Young people benefit from a home that is managed efficiently. The management team work effectively in tackling identified weaknesses and securing the sustained improvement of the service. As a result of this inspection there are two recommendations made in relation to the improved recording of fire drills and the arrangements made for staff development and training.

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 response time to fire drills is recorded consistently (NMS 10.9)
- ensure staff are supported to undertake refresher training in the use of restraint and have access to further training. (NMS 18.1).

Outcomes for children and young people

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

From their starting points young people's progress is exceptional. They benefit from excellent attendance at school and young people are involved successfully in gaining further education, training or employment. Educational achievement is exceptional taking into consideration both their attainment and progress since admission. Staff have high aspirations of young people who are supported extensively to pursue their individual aspirations to enable them to achieve and succeed.

Young people are not involved in offending or risk taking behaviour. They are taught to recognise their own strengths and positive attributes which enables them to develop a positive self-view. Young people are developing their emotional resilience; consequently, they are better prepared and equipped to cope with life challenges.

Young people benefit from a broad range of opportunities to enable their positive contribution to the home and the wider community. They learn to develop their own individual interests and they develop their social networks, friendships and hobbies along the way. Young people's leisure needs are catered for extensively, through well-planned activities which reflect their interests comprehensively, for example, in sport and leisure, animal care, dance and agriculture. Young people benefit from a diverse range of positive and enjoyable activities.

Young people say, 'There's lots of good things about living here. There's good staff who help you with things like cooking. I enjoy it here, it's better than being at home...You have more freedom and they (staff) help you with your independence...I like the games here and we get to go places like go-karting and pool, we do loads of stuff.'

Young people are actively supported to pursue further education, training and employment as part of their effective preparation, for adulthood. The home has requested young people's pathway plans, where needed, to promote their smooth and successful transition towards adulthood. Young people are provided with encouragement, advice and support to develop their life-skills and this ensures they have the right skills to live independently. Young people are supported to take

reasonable risks as part of their growth and natural development. For example, help and support has been provided to enable some young people to pass their driving test and this has resulted in one young person acquiring their own vehicle. As a result, young people learn to behave responsibly and they benefit from a high level of independence.

Staff recognise the importance that contact plays in securing young people's support networks for the future. Young people are supported to strengthen their family and social links to help them maintain their positive relationships and social networks.

Quality of care

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

Staff place the health, welfare and safety of all young people at the centre of their practice. They value young people as individuals and they strive to achieve the best outcomes possible. Young people make excellent progress and they benefit from the care and support provided to them.

Young people enjoy excellent relationships with staff and they benefit from individualised care which takes account of their feelings, needs and wishes. They feel valued as their views and opinions are taken seriously. Young people's needs in relation to gender, ethnicity, culture and personal identity are identified and addressed positively.

Young people receive excellent support to promote their healthy development. Drugs, smoking and alcohol misuse is pro-actively discouraged and young people are taught to take responsibility for their own health. Healthy eating and physical exercise is actively encouraged and young people learn to understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Young people are registered with local health services and they have access to the services they need to promote their emotional health.

Young people are fully involved in all aspects of their care. As a result, they can make a positive contribution to how their needs are met and their day-to-day lives are managed. There is excellent communication between young people and staff. Young people are involved and able to influence the running of the home.

No complaints have been made by young people since the previous inspection. However, young people understand how to make a complaint and they have confidence that their complaints would be treated seriously.

The home benefits from excellent access to a diverse range of community facilities. As a result, young people enjoy easy access to local places of interests, such as a shopping centre, sports, amusement and leisure facilities. The home is designed and maintained in accordance with young people's needs and characteristics. It provides young people with a high standard of quality living accommodation. The home is extremely well-resourced and it provides young people with a positive range of

enjoyable activities.

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 suffering abuse, exploitation, neglect and bullying. Young people are cared for safely by skilled, knowledgeable and highly experienced staff. There are no issues with young people placing themselves, or others at risk of significant harm. Risks associated with young people are identified clearly and safe working practices are adhered to. Staff are trained to recognise and respond to suspected abuse and they know how to handle allegations. Young people are kept safe and feel safe.

Young people's positive behaviour is promoted, so much so that the use of restraint is rare. Restraint is only ever used as a last resort to protect young people from the risk of harm, accident or injury. Staff are trained in the use of restraint, however, not all staff have received refresher training to enable them to keep up to date with professional practice. This could potentially lead to inconsistencies in staff's practice. Staff recognise young people's particular vulnerabilities and this enables them to take action to minimise and reduce the risk of bullying.

Staff know how to implement and follow agreed protocols to promote young people's safe return if they are missing. They work with young people, their social workers and others to reduce the frequency with which they go missing. As a result, the incidences of young people going missing are reducing and further occurrences are minimised.

Staff use positive reinforcement to raise and develop young people's self-esteem. This ensures young people develop a strong sense of self-worth and with positive support they learn to behave responsibly. Young people are protected from unsuitable people. Staff employed to care for young people are carefully vetted to ensure only suitable people are employed.

Young people are provided with a physically safe and secure environment. The home is a safe place for young people to live. Health and safety is taken seriously. This ensures young people are not exposed to any risks associated with the premises. Gas and electrical appliances are contractually serviced and regular fire tests and drills are undertaken. However, the response time to fire evacuation drills is not recorded to assess the effectiveness with which fire drills are held.

Leadership and management

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

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the previous inspection. There have been no complaints or concerns. The home continues to meet the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose. It has a proven track record of

compliance in meeting the National Minimum Standards for Children's homes and the amended Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

The home has a permanent manager employed who provides the home with effective leadership. As a result, young people benefit from a home that is managed efficiently. The home's performance is monitored effectively and this enables the manager to identify the home's strengths and weaknesses. The systems used for quality assurance include independent monitoring visits, external manager's visits and internal managerial monitoring which are all used to report on the home's conduct. As a result, the home is able to improve its performance, where necessary. The home has a written development plan in place which is reviewed annually.

The home is adequately resourced and there are sufficient numbers of skilled staff employed to meet young people's needs. Young people benefit from a caring, capable and qualified staff group who promote their positive outcomes and needs comprehensively. The home can demonstrate the positive progress young people have made and the impact it has had on young people's lives and how their outcomes have improved overtime.

Significant incidents involving young people are notified promptly to the responsibly authority to ensure appropriate action is taken to promote young people's welfare. The home maintains excellent relationships with the community and there are no issues with anti-social behaviour. The home is well-maintained both internally and externally. All health and safety requirements are met.

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.