

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC040509
Inspection date	06/10/2011
Inspector	Anthony Kyem
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	09/11/2010
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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 provides care and accommodation for up to three young people of either gender on a medium- to long-term basis. The home is run by a local authority that provides services to support young people with emotional and behavioural problems.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people are very settled and they enjoy living at the home. They receive the support they need to be safe and feel safe. The home is well staffed to meet young people's needs and relationships between young people and staff are exceptionally positive.

Young people benefit from the individualised care provided to them by highly skilled, qualified and experienced staff. Their needs are comprehensively identified and their placements plans as used by staff to support them. Young people are consulted so they are able to contribute to decisions made within the home. They receive fair and equal treatment to promote their rights to participation and inclusion. Young people benefit from a home that is managed efficiently and is effective at keeping young people safe.

Young people say, 'I am allowed to have what I want when I'm good...I don't write my placement plan but staff talk about it to me...There are no issues with bullying not at all...Best thing is the staff, especially, my key worker. I've not had a day off school for nearly a year...The staff are there no matter what... I would like to say thank you and thanks to all the staff and my social worker for putting me here... Hand on my heart I would give them outstanding.'

A parent says, 'X is back in mainstream school, she does not drink or take drugs, or go missing...It's all thanks to the management and staff at Northfield. Because of them I have my daughter back. I cannot credit them enough for the fantastic job they have done... X is like a different child. The time and effort and work they have put in is amazing...X is on target to get her GCSEs which I never thought was possible. I can't thank them enough; they truly are an exceptional team.'

There are no requirements or recommendations made as a result of this inspection.

Areas for improvement

Outcomes for children and young people

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

From their starting points young people thrive and they make excellent progress. They receive the support they need to enjoy and achieve. Young people's positive outcomes are actively promoted and they receive personalised care which ensures their needs are addressed very effectively.

Young people attend school and they are enthusiastically supported to learn and achieve. Their educational attendance is excellent and their attainment at school is comparable with their peers. Staff have high aspirations of young people and they actively promote their educational achievement. A school representative says, 'On behalf of the school we thought it was extremely important to share with you how supportive (the manager) and her team have been...What an excellent job they have done.' A teacher from another young person's school says, 'In all honesty, X is the most focussed pupil and has more determination to improve her literacy than most of her peers...I'd like to add that X has been excellent around the school and has improved in many ways...X has risen above the rivalry of other pupils and has the respect of staff and peers.'

Young people are supported to develop their self-confidence, emotional resilience and self-worth. They are well supported to understand their backgrounds as this helps them to make sense of their past experiences. Young people discuss their personal issues with staff and they seek advice and support, where necessary. Consequently, young people receive the support they need to promote their resilience.

Young people have contact with their families and friends to promote their support networks and social contacts. They receive high levels of individual support to develop their daily living skills and staff provide good advice to raise young people's awareness of personal safety. As a result, young people stay safe and enjoy their independence.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from excellent relationships with staff who support, befriend and advise them. Their feelings and opinions are ascertained to ensure their views remain central to how the operates and performs. As a result, child-centred practice is achieved and young people feel valued, well treated and involved.

Young people receive excellent support with their health and their health needs are clearly identified. Young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and they have access to health advisors and specialist services to promote their physical, emotional and psychological health. Young people receive healthy foods in accordance with their wishes and they are actively supported to lead a healthy lifestyle. Young people's medication is stored safely and this is administered by trained and competent staff.

Young people know how to complain and their complaints are investigated and acted upon. They receive information so they know what services are available to support them and champion their rights. Young people enjoy a wide range of purposeful and enjoyable activities and they participate in activities of their choice. Consequently, young people develop their social skills, social networks and friendships.

The home is maintained to a high standard of decorative repair. It provides young people with a homely environment, which their needs comprehensively. The home is not disguisable as a children home. It blends in effortlessly with other local properties.

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. They are safeguarded and protected from abuse, bullying, neglect and exploitation. Staff are trained to deal with suspected abuse so they are able to protect young people and promote their welfare. Young people confirm there are no issues with bullying.

Appropriate procedures and protocols are followed to promote young people's safe return, if they are missing. Staff do their best to help young people understand the risks and dangers involved. Consequently, there has been a positive reduction in young people going missing from the home.

Young people's positive behaviour is promoted and the use of restraint is only ever used as a last resort. The use of restraint is low and this is testament to staff's ability to manage young people's behaviours safely and effectively. Sanctions used by staff are fair and staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour management. This enables young people to understand the home's rules and consequences for unacceptable behaviour. Young people are actively supported to understand and manage their own feelings to help them develop greater self-control and socially-acceptable behaviour.

The home provides young people with a safe and secure environment. Risks associated with young people and the premises are clearly identified to ensure young people are protected. Staff employed are subject to rigorous checks to assess their suitability to care for children. Consequently, young people are safeguarded and protected. Health and safety systems are managed efficiently to keep young people and staff safe from accident or harm.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from living in a home that is managed extremely efficiently and effectively. The manager understands the strengths of the service and a comprehensive development plan has been devised which charts areas for

improvement. The home has an excellent track record of high performance and it achieves an outstanding standard of quality care. Young people's outcomes are promoted very effectively.

There were no requirements made at the last inspection. Two recommendations made previously have both been addressed. Restraints records now include appropriate information and consent is now available for staff to administer first aid and homely remedies, if required.

Staff are highly skilled, well trained, experienced and qualified. This enables them to promote the needs of young people and achieve their positive outcomes. Staff, receive excellent training and support and this enables staff to undertake their duties effectively. Senior managers are highly supportive of the service and they consult with young people and staff to ensure their views are taken into account, to promote the smooth operations of the home.

The performance of the home is monitored effectively. The registered manager has high expectations of staff and they supervise and support them to provide young people with the care and support they need. Quality assurance systems are rigorous and these are used to review and improve the standard and quality of young people's care. The views of young people and those significant to them are regular ascertained to enable them to have a positive influence in how the home is run. This enables the manager to act on the views of relevant stakeholders to improve the quality of young people's care.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.