

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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This home provides care, education and accommodation for up to two young people of either sex, aged 10 to 17 years. The home is run and managed by a private organisation that operates a number of other children's homes. The home is easily accessible by car or public transport and benefits from good access to local amenities. The home is situated within a residential area and is comprised of four single bedrooms, two of which provide young people with their own separate bedrooms. The other bedrooms are used by staff as sleeping quarters, and one bedroom is also used as an office. The home has an education room, games room, lounge, and dining area, kitchen, washing facilities, en-suite facilities and utility room.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Young people are well cared for and treated. Their needs are thoroughly assessed by staff and they receive good levels of personal support, including therapy for those who require it. Young people receive good support and this enables them to make positive progress.

Young people's welfare and safety is promoted and there are no issues with bullying, unauthorised absence or issues to do with young people placing themselves at risk, of significant harm. Staff receive relevant training to help them manage young people's behaviours safely. The home provides young people with a homely place to live, which is pleasantly decorated and furnished to good quality standards. As a result of this inspection, five recommendations have been made.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

A varied menu is provided and young people's likes and dislikes of foods are considered so that mealtimes are enjoyed by them. Healthy eating is promoted and this ensures that young people receive a healthy and nutritious diet. Young people can assist staff with the planning of the menu and with the preparation and cooking of meals.

The majority of staff are trained in the use of first aid, food hygiene and safe medication practices. Medication checks are routinely undertaken and staff ensure that medication is stored and administered safely.

Young people are registered with local health services and supported to attend their health appointments, where needed or necessary. This ensure that young people's good health and well-being is promoted. Young people's health needs are effectively assessed and their needs are well documented and recorded.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements in place to promote young people's privacy. Young people are provided with their own bedrooms and they are able to use the home's washing facilities with privacy and dignity. Young people's records are treated confidentially and their information is securely stored by staff to protect it.

The home has a complaints procedure which young people spoken to were familiar with. The policy is explained to young people on admission and it enables them to raise any issues with staff, or seek external support and advice, if necessary. Complaints records show that young people have previously raised concerns about staff changes. However, these issues have now been resolved to enable young people to receive continuity of care. No irregularities with the home's complaints records were identified.

Staff are trained in safeguarding so they are knowledgeable of the procedures to be followed to protect young people from abuse and harm. They know how to report allegations or suspected abuse and they inform statutory agencies of any significant occurrences. This ensures that young people are safeguarded and their welfare and safety is promoted.

There are no current issues or concerns to do with young people placing themselves at risk of harm. Bullying is not an issue and young people resident are closely supervised and well supported. Unauthorised absences are managed effectively, although there has not been a reported absence for a substantial period of time.

The behaviours of young people are managed well. The majority of staff are trained in behaviour management to enable them to respond to challenging situations in a skilled and sensitive way. The use of restraint is extremely rare and is only ever used as a last resort. The use of sanctions and restraints are closely monitored to ensure that no measures are used excessively.

Recruitment and selection procedures have already been inspected this year. These were found to be in order with the suitability of staff to provide care for vulnerable groups having been carefully assessed to offer young people appropriate protection.

All staff have enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks, which are undertaken every three years.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The home operates a key working system which enables young people to receive good levels of personal support. One to one working provides young people with good support and protection. Young people receive advice and support on a broad range of issues which encourages them to make positive choices, to enhance successful outcomes for them.

The home employs qualified therapists to support young people and provide guidance and consultation to staff. Young people receive specialist support when they need it.

Education is actively promoted and this enables young people to enjoy and achieve. Young people are supported with all aspects of their education and there is home tuition available for them, if required. The home obtains copies of young people's personal education plans, individual education plans and statements of special educational needs, which were mostly available. However, there was one young person's file which did not have a personal education plan available.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's needs are comprehensively covered within well written placement plans, including areas of assessed risk and vulnerability. Plans are clearly written and they help staff meet the individual needs of the young people they care for. Areas of need, for example, health, education, leisure, equality and diversity and contact are equally promoted.

There is evidence that young people's needs are reviewed within statutory timescales. Young people are encouraged to be involved in this process, to enable them to make a positive contribution. The home facilitates and supports contact so that young people can sustain their important family links.

Young people are consulted and they get to spend time with staff on a regular and individual basis. This ensures they receive good advice and support. Young people's feelings and wishes are regularly ascertained and they are encouraged to attend young people's meetings so they can have a say in how the home is run.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is situated in a quiet residential area and benefits from good access to local amenities. The home is not distinguishable as a children's home as it fits in well with surrounding properties.

The home comprises of four single bedrooms, two of which provide young people with their own private living accommodation. The home has an education room, lounge area, dining room, kitchen and washing facilities for young people's use.

The home is homely in design, pleasantly furnished, decorated and maintained to a good standard of decorative and structural repair.

Currently, none of the young people resident are of school leaving age, so they are not ready or required to begin work to help prepare them for their independence. The home does encourage and support young people to be semi independent by assisting them with the development of life skills.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a written Statement of Purpose which describes what the home sets out to do for young people. The document includes information about staff, including their qualifications and relevant experience. The statement shows that most staff have either completed, or are enrolled to complete National Vocational Qualification training. However, newer members of the staff team have yet to be enrolled. The statement does not include full and proper details of the current staff team including the details of the new Responsible Person.

Staff receive relevant training in accordance with the work that they perform. There is a rolling training programme for staff to pursue and access further training. Young people are cared for by the same staff group which enables them to form trusting relationships with staff.

The home's administrative systems are sound and these are overseen by the manager to ensure that practice within the home is monitored effectively. Quality assurance visits are also undertaken every month by a senior representative of the company. As part of this process the views of young people and staff are regularly ascertained to ensure the home is operating smoothly.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people are cared for by a diverse staff team and are treated and respected as individuals. They receive equality of opportunity and their rights to choice, privacy, safety and protection are well promoted. Young people receive individualised care in accordance with their needs and wishes.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all staff are trained in first aid and safe medication practices (NMS 13.1)
- ensure all staff are trained in the use of care and control (NMS 22.8)
- obtain a copy of the personal education plan for each child (NMS 14.2)
- ensure that 80% of the workforce are qualified to NVQ level 3 (NMS 29.5)
- include in the Statement of Purpose details of the current staff group and their roles. (NMS 1.2)