

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Anthony Kyem
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You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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

The home is one of a number of single occupancy children's homes which are run and managed by the same private company. The home provides education, care and accommodation for children and young people of either sex, aged 10 to 17 years.

One young person was present, but did not wish to contribute, during the inspection

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was a full unannounced inspection. The inspection was used to look at the home's performance in meeting the National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes and the Every Child Matters outcomes.

The home is a good service where young people's needs are carefully assessed. Education and leisure are actively promoted. Young people's welfare and safety is prioritised and staff work with young people to promote their safety and good health.

Young people's meaningful engagement in consultation is limited. However, staff strive to ascertain the views of young people through less informal methods. Staff whilst well trained, have yet to achieve the minimum completion ratio of 80%, of staff who are qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 or above.

A small number of recommendations have been made as result of this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions raised at the previous inspection. The one recommendation that was made has been addressed successfully. The home's fire risk assessment has since been reviewed and actions completed to promote fire safety.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people receive good support to help them to lead healthy lifestyles. They are encouraged to eat healthily and they receive good support and advice on relevant health issues. Young people are registered with dentists, opticians and general practitioners, to promote their good health and physical well-being. Young people have access to specialist workers to promote their emotional health. The home

employs specialist workers who are trained and qualified to help young people therapeutically.

Young people's health needs are carefully assessed and monitored. Staff record all health appointments and outcomes. Young people have their health needs assessed annually, to promote their healthy, physical development.

Staff are trained in the use of first aid and there are good provisions available for them to administer first aid, if required. Most are trained in the safe administration of medication. The procedures for the administration, storage and recording of medication are stringently followed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is promoted and staff are always respectful when entering bedrooms. They ensure that young people's confidential information is stored securely and that young people's dignity is promoted when washing. Young people have their own bedrooms to store their personal possessions safely.

The home's complaints procedure is explained to young people on their admission. Records show that all complaints are taken seriously. No complaints have been made by young people since the previous inspection.

The home has a zero tolerance towards bullying. Young people and staff have each signed the home's anti bullying agreement. As care is provided for one young person, there are no problems to do with bullying or peer pressure. Young people receive appropriate support if there are identified issues to do with bullying in school.

Staff know how to respond to allegations or suspected abuse. They are trained in safeguarding to promote young people's welfare. Young people's safety is promoted and if they are absent without authority, local searches are initiated to encourage their safe return. Where necessary, police involvement is requested in line with the home's missing person's policy.

Positive behaviour is promoted through the fair use of sanctions, incentives and rewards. Staff are trained to manage difficult behaviour and this includes training in de-escalation and diversion for them to use, to defuse confrontational behaviours safely. Certain types of restraints are no longer used following concerns about the safety of particular holds. This has prompted the manager to suspend the use of such measures.

The safety of the premises is well maintained. Regular fire safety checks are completed and there are frequent fire drills held. Safety certificates for the servicing of fire and portable electrical appliances all indicate that appropriate checks are made within the recommended timescales. Regular security checks are also undertaken by staff to promote the home's security.

Staff who work with children have all undergone stringent pre-employment checks to assess their suitability.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There are clear expectations that young people attend school. The role of education is valued and seen as being an important part of every young person's life. Education is actively promoted and young people receive good support and encouragement with school.

The home maintains close links with local schools to monitor young people's progress. By working closely with schools, the home is able to identify any issues early, which ensures that young people receive the help and support they need.

Young people receive good advice and support from staff. Their needs are well recorded and staff have established a good awareness of young people's needs and presenting difficulties. Specialist support is provided for young people to help them achieve emotional stability in their lives. Therapy is planned in accordance with assessed need and young people are supported in developing appropriate friendships to promote their social inclusion.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's placement plans give a detailed assessment of their needs. They include proper consideration of identified risks, which are clearly recorded. Plans are regularly monitored by staff and amended, if necessary, to reflect young people's changing needs and current circumstances. Review meetings are used to formally review young people's progress.

The admissions process is well managed and there are opportunities for young people to visit the home prior to their accommodation. Family contact is promoted and this is arranged in consultation with young people, their placing authorities and families. By facilitating contact young people can maintain their relationships with the people most important to them.

The home is staffed in such a way that young people always have staff available to them. Advice sessions are regularly held to provide opportunities for consultation and support. Team meetings are always open for young people to attend but their engagement in consultation is somewhat limited. This limits opportunities for young people's views about the home to be formally recorded.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is not distinguishable as a children's home as it fits in well with surrounding properties. Overall, the accommodation provided for young people is of a high standard. The home is comfortably furnished to provide young people with a homely, clean, well furnished living environment.

The location of the home is slightly isolating which means that public transport and local amenities are not easily accessible. The home has its own private vehicle for transportation purposes, which is used to take young people to and from school.

As part of this inspection a tour of the premises was undertaken. A bathroom contained recent damage to a window and damaged door frame. The window had been boarded up for safety. The home employs a handy person to ensure that repairs are undertaken promptly. The home is of sound construction and is in a good standard of decorative repair.

The young person resident is not of an age where they are ready, or able to begin work to prepare them for their independence. The young person is encouraged to complete some semi-independence tasks, such as, preparing themselves snacks and drinks and keeping their bedroom clean and tidy. Staff offer young people advice on personal safety.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Care is delivered in a person centred way and placement plans are accurately written, to reflect the needs of the individual. Young people receive care from a diverse staff team, with staff employed of both genders, different social and cultural backgrounds. The same staff work with young people to help them form and develop trusting relationships.

The home has a written Statement of Purpose, which accurately describes what the home sets out to do for young people. The statement shows that less than 80% of staff, are currently qualified to NVQ level 3 or above. However, those who are not qualified are being trained.

The staff team between them are reasonably experienced and there is a training programme in place, which enables staff to develop their skills. All staff have completed mandatory training. The Registered Manager has appropriate experience and demonstrates effective leadership over the home.

The performance of the home is regularly monitored. The home is visited each month by a company director and the Registered Manager undertakes regular administrative checks to ensure that the home is operating smoothly.

Young people have access to the written information held about them, which is securely stored to protect them.

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 young people are regularly consulted and their views and opinions are recorded (NMS 8.1)
- ensure the home is maintained in good order, specifically in relation to replacing or repairing any damaged items (NMS 24.3)
- ensure that 80% of the workforce are qualified to National Vocational Qualification standards at NVQ level 3 or above (NMS 29.5).