

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 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

This home is a purpose-built property which provides residential care, shared care and respite care for up to five young people with autism, learning disabilities, and physical disabilities. It is run by a private organisation.

It is a substantial property built with young people's needs at the forefront of planning and construction. The home benefits from good access to local amenities, public transport, nearby towns and cities. The home has its own private vehicle for group activities and is appropriately equipped to meet the complex needs of the young people who use the service.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people's outcomes are exceptionally positive. Young people thrive and make substantial progress because of the excellent support provided to them. Staff are skilled and appropriately trained, which enables them to meet young people's complex needs, very effectively. Care practice is highly personalised. Young people's needs are clearly identified and care plans are used by staff, to positively address them. Young people are kept safe and they are made to feel safe.

Staff work with young people in way that maximises their individual potential. Communication difficulties are creatively overcome through the empowering use of visual supports, which staff use, to facilitate effective communication. Staff are trained in the use of various communication methods and the home employs a speech and language therapist to work alongside individual young people and staff. The extent to which the home provides young people with personalised care is outstanding. Young people's care plans are highly individualised and these provide staff with a personalised account of how young people's needs will be met, on a day-to-day basis.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff and. They receive continuity of care. This enables them to develop trusting relationships with staff, who are knowledgeable and familiar with young people's individual routines, enabling these to be maintained successfully. A social worker says, 'staff are very welcoming and have a great deal of knowledge about the young people they support.'

The manager of the home routinely monitors the quality of young people's care. She understands the home's strengths and they takes action to rectify any identified weakness to promote the smooth operations of the home. Quality assurance is used effectively to obtain the views of relevant stakeholders to enable them to have a

positive influence in the way the home is run. A parent says this about the home, 'they are excellent and very dedicated... It's improved so much over the years. It's fantastic...Yes, I would have to say, it's outstanding.'

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure medical consent is obtained for staff to administer homely remedies, where applicable. (NMS 6.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The arrangements made to promote the health needs of young people are outstanding. Young people's good health is promoted as part of the extensive arrangements made, to promote young people's welfare. Parents retain parental responsibility as part of the home's shared care arrangements. This enables them to retain their caring responsibilities. Young people who are looked after as part of a voluntary arrangement are registered with appropriate health services. Staff work in close partnership with parents and with a wide range of health professionals to ensure young people have access to the services they need, to meet their identified health needs.

Staff are trained to meet the specific health needs of the young people they care for. They are trained in autism and epilepsy to enable them to have a good knowledge and understanding of each individual's needs. Staff are trained to administer young people's medication, in accordance with the home's policies and procedures for the safe administration of medication. This ensures safe working practises are followed, by staff, to protect young people from harm. Medical consent is in place for young people to receive medical treatment and emergency first aid. However, consent for the administration of homely remedies is not available for staff to administer non prescribed medication, if required.

The promotion of young people's education is a shared responsibility between the home, schools and young people's families. Staff are highly supportive of young people's education and they work enthusiastically with young people's schools and their families to promote successful learning. Communication between the home, parents and schools is excellent, enabling young people to receive continuity and consistent support.

The home provides an extensive range of community based activities to promote young people's education, build self- esteem, enhance independence and promote social inclusion and the development of life skills. Young people clearly benefit from these opportunities with and their social skills are enhanced by these experiences. This is a particularly strong and impressive feature of this service.

Contact is supported so that young people can sustain their relationships with their own birth families. Parents confirm they are always greeted and made to feel very welcome at the home. One parent said, ' I am very happy with Fairfield. My son seems happy and excited to go and that's what's important. I'm very appreciative that Fairfield have been open to my suggestions... It really feels like were working in partnership.'

Another parent said, ' I was bowled over by your warmth and the way you always make my family and I feel very welcome. It is really good to know that we are welcome at any time and any day...You and all your staff go above and beyond your duty...Myself and all my family are very grateful. '

Young people are actively supported to develop their independent living skills. Purposeful opportunities are provided for young people to develop new skills, with excellent support and encouragement from staff. This enables young people to

develop their self- confidence to complete daily living tasks safely and independently. Social inclusion is a high priority. Young people benefit from having access to the same services as their peers, to promote their participation and inclusion in the community. This enhances their self- worth, resilience and self- esteem.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive considerable support to express themselves so they can make informed decisions and choices. Every effort is made to consult with them and involve them. Young people's families are meaningfully involved in consultation, as expert voices. This empowers young people and their families in the knowledge that their views and opinions are actively sought and considered, so they are able to have a say in all decision that may effect them. The home has developed a photographic slide show to document young people's progress in a imaginative way. This enable young people to make a positive contribution towards their review meetings. It provides young people with a personalised account of their time within the home.

Staff have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of individual children. Whilst young people struggle with verbal communication, staff have grown to recognise the signs, behaviours and symptoms of fear, anxiety or concern, which enables them to take action to support young people in times of need. Young people's needs arising from culture and disability are clearly identified and this ensures their needs are promoted effectively. The home ensures that young people and their families are familiar with the home's complaints procedure. Complaints made by parents whilst rare, are handled both sensitively and fairly to resolve any conflicts or concerns.

Young people are actively engaged in a wide range of enjoyable, stimulating and creative activities. For example, the home has farm project purposefully designed for young people with disabilities. It provides young people with the unique opportunity to interact with animals, feed, groom and care for them. The farm boasts an activity room, willow dome and outdoor play area. It also has a place for young people to go camping to broaden their practical, social and interactive experiences. Photographs of young people spending time at the farm were seen and staff spoken to confirmed the farm was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The location of the home ensures that young people have access local places of interest. The home is purposefully designed to cater for young people's complex needs, including needs arising from disability. Special adaptations have been made, where necessary, to provide young people with a home which is both safe and suitable. The home is decorated in neutral colours for the purposes of reducing stimuli. For this reason bedrooms are simplified in accordance with young people's needs and behavioural traits.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There is a calm, effective and gentle approach towards behaviour management, in which, staff are appropriately trained. On the rare occasion where restraint has been used, it has been used professionally, to prevent young people from causing harm to themselves or others. Young people's behaviours are comprehensively assessed with identified risks and behaviour management strategies comprehensively recorded. This enables staff to work with young people safely.

High staffing ratios ensure that young people receive the supervision and support they need to, stay safe and feel protected. There are no issues with young people going missing as young people's whereabouts are closely supervised and known. Young people are actively protected from bullying, intimidation and harassment, to promote their welfare and safety.

Staff are trained in safeguarding so they know how to recognise, respond and report suspected abuse. Safe recruitment and vetting procedures are followed to ensure that staff employed are suitable and safe people to work with children.

The home provides young people with a safe place to live. Young people's welfare and safety is at the centre of the home's practice. The home is kept free from potential hazards. Gas and electrical appliances are tested within the recommended timescales to ensure they are safe. Fire fighting equipment is regularly serviced and fire drills are held frequently to make sure that young people and staff know how to evacuate the premises safely, in accordance with the home's emergency evacuation procedures.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed efficiently and effectively. It provides young people with outstanding levels of high quality care. The manager is aware of the home's strengths and weakness because she scrutinises the home's administration systems, to ensure that what staff do for young people, they do exceptionally well.

The manager has an excellent knowledge of the service, combined with the skills, professional attributes and experience to manage the home in way that benefits young people and supports and empowers the staff.

The home has a strong commitment towards staff training and development. Staff are trained to National Vocational Standards and there are extensive opportunities, for all staff, to further develop their knowledge and skills through high quality training.

The home can demonstrate its capacity for continued improvement, based on its excellent track record of performance and continued compliance with the standards and regulations. The home has a written development plan in place, which is used very effectively to identify areas for potential development. The one recommendation made at the previous inspection is met, as placement plans now describe how young people's cultural, religious, and racial needs will be met and promoted in consultation with parents.

The home is independently inspected each month for which a written report is prepared in relation to the home's conduct. This enables the manager to take positive action to improve performance, where necessary. The manager consults with young people's families to ascertain their views and feelings about the service. This ensures that she has a positive influence in the way in which the home is run and managed.

Young people's files and individual records are stored confidentially to protect their information. The home keeps a private and a permanent record of each young person's time within the home, which shows young people their progress. The home has achieved recognition as an investor in people and is accredited with the National Autistic Society as a specialist provider for children with autism. This is demonstrative of the home's dedication, enthusiasm and commitment, towards sustaining continued improvement.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.