

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Anthony Kyem
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Provision subtype	Children's home

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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a private home that provides care and accommodation for up to five young people of single gender with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home specialises in providing a therapeutic service for young people.

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 make exceptional progress in relation to their starting points. They benefit from well-planned care that promotes their needs effectively. Young people's needs are met comprehensively and their positive outcomes are extremely well promoted. An independent reviewing officer says: 'Although this was the first time I had visited the home, I was very impressed by the service being offered. The young person concerned has made excellent progress with regards to his overall development. The young person is well supported to reach their full potential and there is a clear plan in place. In the short time the young person resided at the home there have been significant improvements.'

Young people feel their views and opinions are listened to. As a result, they feel valued, respected and involved in their care. Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff and they receive continuity of care to sustain their positive attachments. Young people are generally very positive about their individual experiences. Young people live in a safe and secure environment, where they are kept safe and feel safe.

As a result of this inspection, there are a small number of recommendations and requirements made for the registered person to address. These relate to improved recording, managerial monitoring, consent to any form of restriction placed upon young people's communications and the development of a written development plan.

Areas for improvement

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
15 (2001)	ensure that consent is obtained from the placing authority in relation to the imposition of any restriction placed upon young people including restrictions on electronic means of communication. (Regulation 15 (7) (a))	23/07/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure the effectiveness of sanctions is reviewed and young people are encouraged to record their views in the records kept by the home (NMS 3 .18)
- ensure that the children's guide sets out how young people can contact the Children's Rights Director (NMS 13.5)
- ensure the home has a written development plan to sustain and/or improve the quality of young people's care (NMS 15.2)
- ensure young people are supported to record their views in relation to their plans and any subsequent review of them. (NMS 25.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people receive high-quality care that promotes their needs and improves their future outcomes. They receive extensive support to develop their positive self-view. The home works in close partnership with a range of professionals to ensure young people's needs are met, comprehensively.

Young people are registered with local health services to promote their physical health. They receive support to attend their health appointments and they have access to therapeutic support to promote their emotional health. Young people learn to lead a healthy lifestyle and they learn to take responsibility for own health and well-being. Young people enjoy good health and this is promoted well.

Young people benefit from excellent attendance at school and there are clear expectations for young people to attend. Residential staff work enthusiastically with teaching staff to promote young people's learning and achievement. Consequently,

young people learn to make the most of the educational opportunities provided for them to succeed. Young people view education positively and they benefit from the support they need to learn and achieve.

Staff have aspirations for young people. They help young people to recognise their own strengths to promote their self-esteem. Young people's goals and aspirations are well supported and this ensures young people achieve their full potential. Young people are supported to pursue further education, training and employment as part of their effective preparation for adulthood.

Appropriate plans are in place to help prepare young people for their independence. Staff work with young people to develop their life skills to ensure they have the self-confidence, knowledge and skills to leave care and live independently. Unfortunately, young people are not allowed to take controlled risks as part of their independence. Consequently, they cannot achieve a higher level of planned independence.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy living at the home and they benefit from positive relationships with staff. Their needs are identified clearly and they make positive progress in developing their self-esteem, self-confidence and a positive self-view.

There have been no complaints made by young people since the previous inspection. Young people understand how to complain and they receive useful information to enable them to do so. However, the information made available to them does not contain the contact details of the Children's Rights Director to promote their rights to independent advice or representation.

Young people say, 'It's alright, I would give the home 7/10. Sometimes it's too strict...The majority of staff we get on with...Some things have completely changed for the better... We should be allowed to do what we want and not be followed around... I have learnt a lot and have benefited from being here and I wouldn't be at the point where I am now if I didn't live here... Yeah, there's lots of activities, there's a broad range of activities.'

Young people's needs are assessed comprehensively. Their placement plans are comprehensively written and this information is used by staff to support young people and provide them with well-planned care that meets their needs and promotes their welfare. Young people receive good support to understand the content of their plans so they understand the reasoning behind them. However, their views are not routinely recorded to ensure appropriate consideration is given to their views about their plans. Despite this, young people are involved in their reviews, key-working sessions and house meetings that allow them put forward their views to ensure they have a say in how the home is run and how their daily lives are managed.

Young people benefit from a broad range of positive activities that provide them with diverse opportunities to develop their own interests and hobbies. The home provides young people with a homely, comfortable and safe environment which meets young people's needs. The home is appropriately located and is kept in a good standard of decorative repair. A social worker says: 'Building is of a good standard and is well maintained. There seems to be a lot of facilities for the children and it allows them to make their mark on the house. This was seen when one young person grew his own garden outside.'

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The care provided for young people, actively promotes their welfare. Staff adhere to safe working practices and young people are kept safe and feel safe. The use of physical intervention is rare. Staff implement positive behaviour management strategies which negate the need for and use of physical restraint. As a result, young people's behaviours are managed safely. Sanctions used by staff are far less controlling than observed at previous inspections. However, the effectiveness of sanctions is not being recorded and young people are not encouraged to record their views, on the measures, types and fairness of sanctions used.

Staff are trained in child protection so they know how to protect young people from neglect, abuse and exploitation. There are no issues with safeguarding and young people are not exposed to any activities that would place them at risk of significant harm. There are no issues with bullying. Staff are vigilant regarding bullying and they use their presence as a deterrent. Anti-social behaviours are managed safely to promote positive relationships within the home. Young people rarely go missing and if they do, their safe return is actively promoted. Risks associated with young people are identified clearly and this enables staff to promote their welfare.

Staff who work with young people are subject to enhanced checks and they are carefully vetted to ensure only safe and suitable people are employed. As a result, young people are protected through the use of safe recruitment procedures. Visitors to the home are always chaperoned and their movements are monitored to protect young people from coming into contact with unsuitable people.

The home provides young people with a physically safe and secure environment, which considers the needs and characteristics of young people. Staff ensure the home is kept free from potential hazards and that regular health and safety checks are maintained. Fire fighting equipment, gas and electrical appliances are all professionally serviced. Regular fire drills are held to ensure young people know how to evacuate the premises safely in the event of an emergency.

Leadership and management

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

The performance of the home is monitored effectively. The responsible individual visits the home each month and produces a written report in relation to the home's conduct. Combined with managerial monitoring, these quality assurance systems are used to promote the smooth and efficient operations of the home.

There are no concerns or complaints to do with the provision that have arisen since the last inspection. The home can demonstrate its capacity for continued improvement based on its track record and performance since the last inspection. Most of the requirements and recommendations made at the previous inspection have been met. Those that have not been met, or have been judged to be partially met, are consequently repeated.

Young people's risk assessments have been reviewed and updated. The manager monitors all matters set out in Schedule 6. However, evaluation of findings and recording could be further improved. Consent has been obtained from placing authorities in relation to the imposition of certain types of restrictions. However, this does not include consent for those restrictions which involve electronic means of communication. The home ensures that where specific measures are used, there is a written policy in place. The home has revised the children's guide to ensure it sets out how young people can contact the independent reviewing officer and access independent advice and representation. However, the contact details of the Children's Rights Director are not recorded as the standards require.

At the time of this inspection, the home was unable to produce a written development plan to show how the home intends to further develop and improve the service. The views of young people and those significant to them are ascertained as part of the home's quality assurance review. Feedback received from those who participated is excellent. Consultation with placing authorities is good and this enables the home to take action on areas of recommended improvement.

Sufficient staff are employed to meet the needs of young people. All staff are suitably trained and most are now qualified. Those who are not qualified are undertaking appropriate training. The home can demonstrate the positive impact it has had on young people's lives and how their outcomes have improved over time.

A social worker says: 'I feel that the young person has improved so much in a short space of time. The young person is not the same child I once knew. He is now a confident young man with a future.'

Another professional says: 'As a manager of some twenty years, this home is one of the most impressive resources I have worked with. The way that staff have managed the young person and helped him to move on in the short time he has been in their care has been excellent.'

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.