

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Anthony Kyem
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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 the same 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 considerable progress in relation to their individual starting points. They benefit from highly personalised, well-planned care that promotes their needs effectively. The progress young people make and the outcomes they achieve are exceptionally positive.

Young people are consulted about their care, to enable them to have an influence in the running of the home. As a result, they feel valued, empowered and listened to. Young people make positive progress across all aspects of their welfare; this includes their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and behavioural development.

Young people are pro-actively protected from abuse, bullying, neglect and exploitation. The use of safe care practices, risk assessment and strong leadership and management protect young people from harm. Young people are kept safe and they have a strong sense of personal safety.

A social worker reports, 'The home is of a very good standard and balances the needs of providing a home, as well as a secure, safe environment that more than meets the young person's needs.'

Young people enjoy living at the home, where they benefit from positive relationships with staff. Young people's views about their care and their relationships with staff are consistently positive.

Young people say, 'It's good here, we've got good staff and the cooking's nice. Staff

are kind and you can talk to them...We have done roller blading, long boating, water rafting, gorse walking and zorbing...It's a very nice place, there's nothing to worry about.'

Young people benefit from a home that is managed efficiently and effectively. The manager has a positive understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. She communicates high expectations to staff about continuing improvement. Staff are enthusiastic about their roles, and their efforts are channelled effectively. Young people benefit from high quality support from qualified, skilled and experienced staff.

A young person's social worker reports: 'Although I have only had limited contact with the home, evidence to date would indicate that they work very hard to improve the outcomes for the young people in their care.' Other comments include: 'Staff are excellent at keeping in touch and facilitating our visits', and, 'by the very nature of their work, evidence would indicate that staff have a very good understanding of how to protect and safeguard the young people in their care.'

As a result of this inspection, there are a small number of recommendations made for the home to address. These relate to the recording of young people's views as part of the home's monitoring activities, obtaining consent for a specific means of supervision, recording the response time to fire drills, and obtaining a pathway plan for an eligible care leaver.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that where specific measures, including electronic devices are used to monitor young people, there is consent from the child and the placing authority (NMS 10.5)
- ensure the response time to fire drills is recorded consistently (NMS 10.9)
- contribute to the development of each child's care plan, including a pathway plan for eligible care leavers (NMS 12.2)
- monitor the welfare of the young people the service provides for, including consultation with young people about their welfare. (NMS 21.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people benefit from good support to promote their positive self-view. They develop self-confidence, skills and emotional resilience, which enables them to cope with life's difficulties. Staff help young people to understand and make sense of their

past experiences to enable them to move forward and plan for the future.

Young people have access to the services they need to promote their positive health. They are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and they receive support to attend their routine health appointments. Medical consent is obtained so staff are clear about what health decisions and responsibilities are delegated to them.

Young people have access to professional support to promote their physical, emotional and psychological well-being. Staff involved in delivering therapeutic interventions have appropriate qualifications, skills and training. Young people benefit from a healthy environment that promotes positive outcomes for them.

Young people's medication is stored and administered safely. Young people are taught about key health issues and they receive good support to lead and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Consequently, young people learn to take responsibility for their own personal, physical and sexual health.

Young people benefit from exceptionally good attendance at school or alternative educational provision. The educational achievement of young people is exceptional, taking into account both their attainment and progress in relation to their starting points.

Young people benefit from contact with their friends and families. They maintain their positive relationships with the people who are important to them. By sustaining contact, young people develop their positive support networks for the future. A social worker reports, 'The home is pro-active in supporting contact...Staff have worked extremely hard to develop a good working relationship both with parents and other members of the family.'

Young people receive good support to develop their life skills. They develop practical skills in cooking, shopping and budgeting to promote their readiness for independence. All eligible care leavers are involved in further education to promote their economic well-being. However, not all young people have a pathway plan to support their smooth transition to adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy very positive relationships with staff. They benefit from continuity of care to develop and sustain their positive attachments. They receive excellent support to maintain their positive and constructive relationships. Staff share and implement the home's ethos, philosophy and approach to caring for young people consistently.

The home has its own school on site that provides young people with education. Staff are pro-active in supporting young people's positive educational progress. There is excellent communication between the home and school to ensure young

people benefit from the support and services they need to enjoy and achieve. The quality of teaching is outstanding. A separate inspection report is available in relation to the school provision. A social worker reports, 'The level of the on-site educational provision is very good. Every effort is made to ensure young people actively engage in education.'

Young people are actively supported to make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community. They benefit from a diverse range of highly entertaining, positive and enjoyable activities such as white water rafting, gorge walking, canoeing/kayaking and zorbing. Young people also enjoy sports and various educational activities to promote their particular interests and hobbies. Young people develop self-confidence, practical and social skills as a result of their participation. Additionally, they benefit from the social, developmental and educational aspects of their experiences.

Young people benefit from highly individualised, well-planned care that promotes their needs extremely effectively. The progress young people make and the outcomes they achieve are exceptionally positive. The views of young people are regularly ascertained to enable them to have an influence in the running of the home. Young people know how to make a complaint and their rights are promoted effectively.

Young people are consulted about their plans, to promote their contribution, knowledge and understanding of them. Consequently, young people are familiar with their plans and know what goals they are working towards. Young people's needs arising from personal identity, age, gender and ethnicity are positively addressed, both in care planning and daily living.

Young people benefit from safe, comfortable and homely accommodation. The home is decorated and furnished to high quality standards. There are lots of photographs of young people within the home to create a warm and welcoming environment. Young people have their own separate bedrooms for their privacy, which they are free to personalise in accordance with their personalities. The home's location and design promotes young people's health, safety and well-being.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff are trained in child protection including sexual exploitation, so they know how to deal with allegations, and recognise and report suspected abuse. Staff employed are vetted and selected carefully, to protect young people from unsuitable people. Visitors to the home are always chaperoned and there is suitable monitoring of such people.

Young people are kept safe and feel safe. Young people are actively protected from abuse, bullying, neglect and exploitation. The home has a zero tolerance towards bullying and all other forms of unacceptable behaviour. Young people report there

are no issues with bullying. They benefit from good support to maintain their positive relationships.

It is exceptionally rare for young people to go missing from the home. Should they do so, there are effective protocols and procedures in place to promote their safe return. Young people are protected if they go missing or are absent without authority. The use of restraint, if used at all, is only ever undertaken to protect young people from harm or injury. There have been no restraints since the previous inspection.

There has been a positive reduction in the use of sanctions, which are kept to an absolute minimum. The home now embraces a restorative approach to encourage young people to take responsibility for their actions. This has been effective, as young people are now learning about the potential consequences of their actions and the impact their behaviour has on others. The reparative approach also requires staff to be more imaginative and pro-active in finding ways to support young people to develop positive behaviour.

Staff place the safety of young people at the centre of their practice. Risks associated with young people's behaviours are identified clearly and comprehensively. Young people's safety is never compromised. The careful use of risk assessment, pro-active safeguarding practice and clear behaviour management strategies protect young people and others from coming to harm. A social worker reports: 'Staff have followed procedures to the letter and work hard to assess risk and share relevant information...By the very nature of their work, evidence would indicate that staff have a very good understanding of how to protect and safeguard the young people in their care.'

While consent is obtained for the use of bedroom door alarms, there is no consent for the current use of a certain type of measure, which is used to monitor a young person's movements in the community. Consequently, appropriate consent is required from both the young person and the placing authority to justify the need for the measure.

Young people benefit from physically safe and appropriately secure accommodation. Staff's preparation and training covers health and safety of the premises. Risk assessments for the premises are in place to promote environmental safety. There is a fire evacuation procedure that all young people and staff are familiar with and know how to follow. All health and safety checks and fire evacuation tests are conducted appropriately. However, the response time to fire drills is inconsistently recorded to monitor the effectiveness with which fire drills take place.

Leadership and management

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

The leadership and management of the home are outstanding. Young people benefit from a home that is managed extremely efficiently and effectively. The manager

makes positive use of the home's monitoring activities to promote the quality of young people's care. They tackle identified weaknesses systematically and they build on the home's positive strengths and features. The manager communicates high expectations to staff about sustaining improvement. She consistently stimulates the enthusiasm of staff and channels their efforts effectively.

Recommendations from the previous inspection have been acted on to secure improvement. A comprehensive development plan is now in place to promote the home's improvement and development. Targets for the service are realistic and challenging and these show the home's capacity to improve.

The home can demonstrate the positive difference it has made to young people's lives and it can clearly evidence how young people's outcomes have improved over time. There has been a significant reduction in the use of sanctions and the home now sends copies of Regulation 34 reports to Ofsted in accordance with statutory guidance. The quality of reporting is exceptionally positive.

The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose. The home is appropriately resourced and there are no issues with the home's financial viability. Sufficient numbers of staff, who are appropriately trained and effectively supervised and supported, are employed. Staff benefit from regular supervision and high quality training to develop their knowledge, skills and professional practice. Additionally, all staff are suitably qualified.

The responsible individual visits the home each month to report on the quality of young people's care. They scrutinise the home's performance and consult with young people about their care and welfare. However, the views of young people are not consistently reported on to show their views and opinions are taken seriously. As a result, it is not always clear how young people have contributed to the monitoring of the home. This has not had a negative impact on young people's outcomes.

All significant events relating to the protection of young people are notified to the responsible authorities promptly, so that appropriate action can be taken as a result. Consequently, the home meets its statutory responsibilities to report all serious incidents concerning young people.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.