

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC028174
Inspector	Joanne Vyas
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Direct Care Limited
Registered person address	Direct Care Ltd PO Box 52 Peterborough PE8 9AZ

Responsible individual	Rebecca Ouellani
Registered manager	Barbara Sylvia Nightingale
Date of last inspection	21/02/2014

Inspection date	14/10/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	No enforcement action has been taken since the last inspection.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This is a very settled home with a competent staff team who are supported by a strong Registered Manager. The Registered Manager knows the strengths and weaknesses of the home and takes effective action to address any shortfalls. Young people make good progress especially with regards to their education and behaviour. An external tutor said, 'The staff are, without exception, supportive and professional. The house feels both secure and welcoming and exudes a home-like feel for the girls.'

Some minor shortfalls have been identified at this inspection. These are with regards to reporting on the conduct of the home, records, training for new staff on staff competence to give out medication unsupervised and the amplified phone ring which spoils the homely atmosphere.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately operated home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who may display emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/02/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
10/05/2013	Full	adequate
29/11/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress
23/05/2012	Full	adequate

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment. This specifically is with regard to reducing the level of noise produced when the phone rings (NMS 10.3)
- ensure the visit conducted by an independent person under Regulation 33 wherever possible include private interviews with young people living at the home (and if appropriate their parents, relatives or carers). Staff employed at the home must also be interviewed privately (Volume 5: statutory guidance, paragraph 3.13)
- ensure the report written under Regulation 34 demonstrates how the quality of the care provided is improving. The report should also demonstrate consultation with children, parents and external professionals (Volume 5: statutory guidance, paragraph 3.14)
- ensure records are clear and contribute to an understanding of the child's life. This is specifically with regard to handover records, individual daily

logs, care planning, risk assessment and personal profile sheets (NMS 22)

- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the setting. This specifically is with regard to new members of staff taking on medication duties without adequate training. (NMS 18.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress in this home particularly with regards to their risk-taking behaviour and education. Young people, who have previously regularly gone missing and put themselves at risk of being sexually exploited, feel safe and secure in this home. Furthermore, young people who have been excluded from education make good progress towards getting back into a mainstream school or alternative education. This means young people have more opportunities to receive a good education and therefore their outcomes are significantly improved.

Young people have good health. They enjoy a healthy diet and take regular exercise such as swimming. Young people attend their healthcare appointments which ensure their continued good health.

Young people join clubs, such as dance classes, within the local community which helps them to meet people of their own age and make new friends. This helps young people to become integrated into their local community.

Young people benefit from good contact arrangements with their family, where appropriate. They meet with their families regularly and talk to them on the phone as often as they wish. This enables them to maintain important links with people who are important to them should they return to their home town.

Young people complete household tasks such as washing, cleaning, shopping and cooking. These are all skills which will help them as move into adult life and live independently. Young people have successfully moved into independent living from this home.

Quality of care **good**

Young people have strong relationships with staff and each other. A young person said when responding to an Ofsted survey, 'The staff are very supportive and are welcoming to newcomers. Our home in particular is very welcoming and it has a nice atmosphere, as everybody gets on most of the time.' Young people appreciate the time that staff invest in them, from listening to them sing along with a game on a games console to challenging the local authority to ensure they can get the education they deserve. Young people are happy and relaxed around staff and enjoy their company.

Staff value the views of young people. Young people are included in decisions about their care, their future and the day to day running of the home. They have regular

resident's meetings where they discuss important issues such as bullying, activities, the menu and the latest report completed by an external agency about the conduct of the home. A member of staff responding to the Ofsted survey said, 'We have good residents meetings here and young people are consulted with all the time, on things such as their plans and if they are happy with living at this home.'

Young people know how to make complaints. Any complaints made are taken seriously and quickly responded to. Young people feel able to discuss any issues or concerns they have with staff in the home. A social worker said, 'She developed trusting relationships with her keyworker and other members of staff and she felt she was listened to.'

Staff have a good understanding of the young people in their care. Staff complete life story work and key worker sessions with young people to help them to understand why they have come into care and their care plan. A social worker said, 'She seemed to develop an understanding of the factors that led her to be accommodated and her ability to express herself. Staff demonstrated that they had insight and provided her with warmth as well as boundaries.' Young people also keep memory boxes for keepsakes to remind them of happy times while residing in this home.

Staff work closely with external agencies. They provide weekly and monthly reports to social workers. These are appreciated by social workers who feel they are kept up-to-date with events in their young person's life. Young people benefit as this high level of communication enables social workers to ensure they can provide the best support for the young people in their care.

Young people are registered with the local doctor, dentist and opticians and attend their healthcare appointments. They also have access to mental health services and a therapist for counselling, as required. Medication is securely stored and safely administered.

Staff actively challenge barriers to education. Young people are provided with home tuition with a qualified teacher while they wait for placements in mainstream schools or alternative education. Young people engage well with their education, even when their previous history with education has been poor.

Young people access a wide range of activities which can be educationally based such as visiting the local Romany museum or just fun such as going to the local cinema. A young person said when responding to an Ofsted survey, 'We get to go on activities we like.' Young people also access activities that interest them such as horse riding, swimming, dancing and fishing.

Young people whose first language is not English are well supported to help them understand their care arrangements. For example, young people have interpreters at important meetings such as their statutory reviews and personal education planning meetings. Staff try to engage young people with their culture by showing an interest,

talking about their country of origin and culture and cooking meals from different countries, including those from a young person's country of origin.

The home provides a comfortable, homely environment which young people say they like. They have single bedrooms which they can lock for privacy. Their rooms are highly personalised. The office phone is currently amplified in the dining room which young people find annoying.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people feel safe and secure living in this home. A member of staff responding to the Ofsted survey said, 'The young people have fantastic relationships within the home and feel very safe and secure.' Staff are competent in their knowledge of the home's safeguarding procedures which helps young people to be protected from harm.

Staff respond quickly and effectively when young people are bullied. A social worker said when discussing bullying that staff 'have been quick to spot that and address it'. Young people generally get on well together and enjoy each other's company.

Young people rarely go missing from this home. A member of staff responding to the Ofsted survey said, 'We have had only one episode of a missing person in the last few months to my knowledge which I think is fantastic and a credit to the young people and staff here.' Staff speak to young people about the dangers of going missing and know the home's procedures should young people go missing. Young people are welcomed back into the home when they return.

Young people are generally well behaved in this home. Staff provide a consistent approach to young people and strong boundaries. A social worker said when commenting about staff practice, 'I really appreciated your calm, clear and consistent approach with her. I think this has made a real difference for her and you managed to drastically reduce the number of serious incidents which she was involved in'. Staff provide incentives for good behaviour and sanctions for poor behaviour. The management team have been helping staff to understand the benefits of rewarding positive behaviour and having a more therapeutic approach. Staff are beginning to focus more on the positive behaviour from young people which is having a direct impact on their behaviour, for example, incidents of negative behaviour are reducing and young people are engaging in education.

Staff have training in physical intervention, but focus on de-escalating situations rather than restraint. A young person said in response to the Ofsted survey, 'Staff have never restrained me ever.' A member of staff responding to the Ofsted survey said, 'Young people can talk through with staff with a view to improving how they react in a crisis.' Consequently, young people are rarely restrained in this home.

Staff undergo good vetting procedures which help to safeguard young people from unsuitable adults. The home has good health and safety procedures in place, including good fire procedures, to ensure the safety of young people and staff.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager is qualified and experienced. She has recently completed the Diploma level 5 in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People's Services. She provides strong leadership and understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home. She completes rigorous monitoring of the home's systems and ensures action is taken to address any shortfalls. However, the report written under Regulation 34 does not demonstrate the good work that she does or how the consultation with young people and external professionals helps to improve the home.

Three requirements were made at the previous inspection with regards to the review of the statement of purpose, health and wellbeing of young people and staff training. All the requirements were satisfactorily met at this inspection.

The statement of purpose is a comprehensive document which is regularly reviewed and up-to-date. It provides a good overview of the operation of the home, its ethos, aims and objectives. The reviewed statement of purpose is sent in to Ofsted in a timely fashion.

Young people who are at risk of harming themselves through the use of ligatures (by hanging themselves) are now looked after by staff who have received training in self-harm and the use of ligature knives. Ligature knives are securely stored on the premises should staff need to use them. Staff have also received training in child sexual exploitation, medication, first aid and equality and diversity ensuring they are better equipped to look after the young people in their care. However, new staff are not adequately assessed as competent before they are able to administer medication on their own.

Most staff are appropriately qualified for their role. Some staff have not completed an appropriate qualification yet and managers are taking action to address this shortfall. New staff receive a good induction during their probation period and are expected to start an appropriate qualification immediately after they have completed their probation.

Staff have mixed views about how well they feel supported in the home. Staff responding to the Ofsted survey said, 'My supervision supports and challenges my performance enabling me to improve' and 'My appraisal celebrates my strengths and helps me to improve.' However, not all staff agree with these comments. It is clear that some staff are unhappy at this home but the Registered Manager, supported by

the Responsible Individual, is taking action to address issues of concern. They have been encouraging and supportive to staff, especially around recent changes which have unsettled some staff. Subsequently, all staff work hard to support young people and their apparent dissatisfaction with the service has not impacted on the young people they are caring for.

The conduct of the home is monitored by an external agency each month. The report produced does not currently demonstrate that young people or staff are consulted during these visits. The reports, however, are discussed within the young people's meetings.

Young people who have lived at this home have achieved positive outcomes for themselves. They move into independent living, go to college, move into foster care or are able to move closer to parents, as risks have reduced or been eliminated. A member of staff responding to the Ofsted survey said, 'I am very proud of the work that has been done in the house with the young people and feel we do make a big difference to most of our children.'

Records are mostly clear, up to date and stored securely. Some records such as individual daily logs, handover sheets, care planning documents, risk assessment documents and personal profile sheets do not have some relevant information on them. It is clear, though, that this is a recording issue as staff know the young people well and promote the good health and wellbeing of young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.