

# 1240397

Registered provider: Direct Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to five children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 21 to 22 November 2017

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,** taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 8 February 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:**

None.

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people are making good progress from their starting points.
- Young people's emotional health needs are understood early in placement. Services are quickly mobilised to meet these needs.
- A nurturing staff team is very well led by the registered manager.
- There is a significant reduction in the risk-associated behaviours displayed by all the young people.
- Effective partnership working is evident between staff and other agencies.
- Staff consistently follow comprehensive risk management plans and behaviour support plans.
- Young people have trusting relationships with staff.
- Staff support young people well to maintain contact with their family.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Some young people do not begin school or college placements quickly after moving to the home.
- Young people do not all have access to independent advocacy.
- Ligature training has been commissioned for staff, but many have not received this training.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 08/02/2017      | Full            | Good                 |

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

### Recommendations

- Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. If no education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge them to meet the child's need. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- All children must have access to appropriate advocacy support, and where possible this should be provided by a person that the child chooses. Looked-after children are entitled to an independent advocate to advise them and ensure that they have the support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and lives. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including quality standards', page 23 , paragraph 4.16)
- Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed and recorded in the home's workforce plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)

This is with specific reference to ligature training for staff.

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are making good progress. They benefit from positive, trusting relationships with staff, and grow in confidence and self-esteem. A nurturing ethos is embedded in the staff team. A social worker remarked that a young person 'had made huge progress here'.

Staff are knowledgeable about young people's histories and understand their starting points. Staff have a strong understanding of the impact of early childhood trauma and attachment difficulties. There is evidence of significant progress in relation to young people's emotional health and well-being. All young people have been supported to reduce risk-associated behaviours. This has been evidenced by a significant decrease in vulnerability to sexual exploitation. Incidents of children going missing and self-harm have also reduced.

Staff use their professional relationships with other agencies well to secure services that young people need. Most young people have access to local mental health services alongside the organisation's psychotherapist. One young person said, 'I didn't have help before. It's going fine and it's helping.' Staff are also able to access consultation and advice from the local child and adolescent mental health services and the organisation's psychotherapist. Staff use this to inform their practice and to underpin nurturing care.

The majority of young people are making excellent educational progress from their starting points. One young person previously attended school only 33% of the time, but now goes every day. Staff demonstrated the progress that this young person had made in all areas of her development. She has made significant progress in relation to her communication and independence skills. This gives her significantly improved life chances.

However, for two young people there has been a significant delay in the provision of a full-time package of education. The manager has been proactive in escalating this matter, and in-house education is provided in an informal manner. One young person said, 'I just want a tutor, I'm different now, I want to go to a good school.'

Young people have a say in the running of the home. There are weekly consultation meetings at which their views, wishes and feelings are sought. Most young people say that they feel listened to. However, young people do not always have access to independent advocates. This would help some young people to progress their current issues or concerns.

Where appropriate, staff work with young people, their parents and relatives to promote regular, good-quality contact. Staff support them by transporting young people and, in some circumstances, supervising contact. One parent stated that the staff are not required to supervise the contact, but that she and the young person like to involve them.

Most young people report being happier at this home than they have been before. Young people have experienced a number of changes in placements prior to being accommodated at this home. Generally, they experience a more settled period here.

Young people are well supported when they move on from the home. The staff team consistently speak warmly of these young people and take pride in their achievements. Staff support young people with college applications and interviews at a distance. They give good practical and emotional support to young people moving into supported living arrangements. One young person had been supported into a foster placement, was successful at college and is still in contact with staff.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Young people are safe and become increasingly safe as they settle into the routines of the home.

Despite some young people having a significant history of going missing and being at risk of sexual exploitation, such incidents are now rare. The positive relationships that staff have with young people, combined with staff's understanding of individual risks and triggers, have been extremely effective in safeguarding young people.

Staff are good at addressing the needs of young people who self-harm. This work is underpinned by a sound understanding of the young person's previous life experiences. One young person has reduced their self-harming behaviours to the extent that specialist support services are no longer required. This young person now copes well in full-time education. Staff follow comprehensive risk management plans and keep these plans under regular review. Staff are very responsive to young people's needs and adapt their strategies to respond to changing risks. The manager has commissioned specialist training to support staff to respond to young people who use ligatures. However, many staff have not yet attended this training.

Staff use positive behaviour management strategies well. Challenging or aggressive behaviours are reduced, because staff are skilled in using de-escalation techniques.

Managers and staff understand safeguarding policies and procedures. The manager has undertaken a detailed locality risk assessment. The manager liaises with the police missing from care coordinator on a regular basis to ensure that there is an agreed multi-agency approach when young people run away.

The manager is able to demonstrate safe recruitment processes. She ensures that adults who work with young people at the home are subject to appropriate pre-employment checks, as well as ongoing supervision and appraisal.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She is a skilled manager who has extensive experience of working in residential care. The manager promotes at

the home a strong ethos that young people are central to everything that staff do. She leads a team of staff who feel valued and share her vision to improve the lives of young people. A psychologist referred to the registered manager as 'having ethical values that are consistently shared across the staff team'.

The registered manager and staff have a clear understanding of the progress that young people have made and their future plans. The manager ensures that regular staff supervision and team meetings take place.

The manager has had to make difficult decisions about placement matching, recently. The manager and the relevant local authorities took the decision to move one young person out of the home with a view to improving their safety and well-being, and the welfare of the other children in the home. The manager has provided staff for the new placement to support the transition and maintain some continuity for this young person.

Staff are well trained. There are excellent tracking systems in place to ensure that staff access a range of training. A new staff member confirmed that she had received a thorough induction programme. Nearly all staff are suitably qualified or are working towards the required qualification within the appropriate timescales.

Case records and required documentation are maintained to a high standard and are easily accessible. Files include local authority plans and provide a comprehensive picture of the care provided to young people.

The manager and staff demonstrate consistently positive relationships with key stakeholders. The feedback from parents, social workers and health professionals confirms that the manager and staff work hard to secure positive outcomes for young people. One parent said, 'Staff are lovely and approachable.'

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1240397

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Direct Care Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Goldwyns, Rutland House 90–92, Southend-on-Sea  
SS2 6HZ

**Responsible individual:** Rebecca Ouellani

**Registered manager:** Jacqueline Patel

## Inspector

Bev Allison, social care inspector

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