

SC028174

Registered provider: Direct Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and provides care and accommodation for up to four children and young people aged between 10 and 18 years of age. The home primarily works with children and young people who display challenging behaviours that are often associated with traumatic past life experiences. It works with children and young people who are at risk of or suffering from child sexual exploitation, emotional abuse, physical abuse and neglect.

The home prepares children and young people for a return to the community and, where appropriate, on to independent living.

The home's manager has been registered with Ofsted since February 2018.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 October 2018

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 28 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/11/2017	Full	Good
27/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/09/2016	Full	Good
06/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(2)(c)(i))</p>	31/10/2018
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children.</p> <p>(Regulation 11 (1)(2)(a)(ix)(xii))</p>	31/10/2018

<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))</p>	<p>19/10/2018</p>
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child.</p> <p>In particular, risk assessments for young people need to be clear and up to date. The assessment should identify the relevant risk and the actions that should be taken to meet and/or reduce the risks.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))</p>	<p>19/10/2018</p>
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(2)(h))</p>	<p>31/10/2018</p>
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p>	<p>31/10/2018</p>

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and

promotes their welfare.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home.

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f))

Recommendations

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The home is not always a nurturing environment for children who have experienced early childhood trauma. At times, children's challenging behaviours adversely affect other residents in the home. This means that children's day-to-day experiences are not always good.

Not all staff and managers understand children's behaviours in the context of their traumatic histories. Some children said that they did not feel able to share their problems with staff. One child said, 'They [the staff] don't understand me. They just see me as being bad. They do not understand what is going on in my head.'

All children are in education or are attending alternative educational provision that reflects their needs and interests. This is progress for some children who, prior to their placement, were either not in education or had sporadic school attendance. Managers and staff help children to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Some repairs and redecoration of the home are required. This includes repairing or replacing carpet that is frayed and unclean. Staff sometimes lock children's bedroom doors in order to try to manage their behaviours. Children's access within the home is therefore restricted. As a result of this practice, children are not living in a home that is as homely and welcoming as they need and deserve.

Despite the above shortfalls, some children report that they are happy in the home. Staff work hard to engage children and ensure that their needs are fully met. A strength of the home is the good multi-agency work that takes place. Once a need is identified for a child, referrals are made to the necessary agencies to access the appropriate help and support.

Staff help children to maintain links with their families. Staff facilitate and supervise children's time with their families, even when they live a considerable distance away. This crucially assists children to develop or maintain a sense of identity.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

For one child, managers and staff have failed to ensure that a serious incident was properly managed. Shortfalls in behaviour management, combined with the child's risk assessment not being followed, left the child in an extremely vulnerable and risky situation.

Furthermore, there are significant gaps in the recording of this safeguarding incident. Records lack any clarity in identifying specifically what happened. There are important differences between what the child said happened and the accounts of managers and staff. Such poor recording makes it difficult to learn any lessons and rectify any mistakes that were made. This area of practice requires significant improvement.

Risk assessments are not yet of a good standard. Risk assessments are not up to date and they are unclear. Conflicting and confusing information makes it difficult for staff to know what action to take to safeguard children.

For some children, however, their lives stabilise in this home. Despite having a significant history of going missing from home and self-harm, some children's risk-taking behaviours have reduced. This is significant progress. A social worker said, 'She has made great progress. She has really settled down and staff have helped her so much. Because of the work they have done, she is now in such a better place than she was before.'

For another child, incidents of challenging behaviours resulting in physical intervention have significantly reduced. A social worker said, 'She attended the home in crisis. However, she quickly settled, and staff were intuitive and attentive to her needs. They hold the child at the forefront of everything they do.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of the management team requires improvement. While the manager is committed to the children and passionate about the care they receive, good practice is not yet embedded at the home.

The manager has some good ideas about how the home needs to be developed and she accepts the deficits that have been identified during the inspection. She, along with the senior management team, is keen to make the changes that are necessary.

Systems to monitor children's progress are not robust. As a result, managers and staff do not have a comprehensive oversight of the quality of care provided to children. This requires improvement so that any gaps in practice can be fully addressed and standards improved.

The manager has failed to properly record what discussions took place and what actions were taken following concerns being raised about some staff members' practice and behaviours in the home. Such poor recording prevents any independent review of the incidents taking place and has the potential to jeopardise safeguarding investigations.

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 differences 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: SC028174

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: Direct Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Maybrook House, 2nd Floor, Queensway, Halesowen, Worcestershire B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Rebecca Ouellani

Registered manager: Carol Nobbs

Inspector:

Davinia Lawton, social care regulatory inspector

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