

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 who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home's manager has been in post since February 2019. She is submitting her application to Ofsted to be registered.

Inspection dates: 24 to 25 April 2019

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

inadequate

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: 19 September 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/09/2018	Full	Good
21/11/2017	Full	Good
08/02/2017	Full	Good

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 care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))</p>	31/05/2019
<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; and</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(c)(i)(ii))</p>	31/05/2019
<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>	28/06/2019

<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>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</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)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(iii)(v)(ix))</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 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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))</p>	<p>31/05/2019</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 promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p>	<p>28/06/2019</p>

<p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))</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 promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f))</p>	<p>28/06/2019</p>

Recommendations

- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Inspection judgements

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

The requirement from the previous inspection remains unmet and has been made again at this inspection. Additionally, a further five requirements and one recommendation are made at this inspection.

The home has experienced significant staffing changes. The longstanding registered manager and four other staff members have left. This has had a significant impact on the team. There has been a high usage of agency staff who are not always familiar

with the children's needs. The staffing instability has led to:

- a lack of continuity of care for children
- inconsistent and ineffective behaviour management
- low staff morale
- children not always feeling confident in staff's abilities.

Damage to property has not been addressed in a timely manner. As a result, the home is not a warm and welcoming environment. One child said, 'I feel embarrassed. No one has painted the walls and everyone who comes can just see all the plaster and wonder what has been happening.'

During some incidents, children's challenging behaviours have adversely affected other children. This means that children's day-to-day experiences are not always good. Incident reports reflect the fact that some staff lack confidence in their ability to manage challenging behaviours.

Staff shortages have impacted negatively on the ability of staff to deliver regular, good-quality key-worker sessions. The new manager has started to address this issue. The quality of key-worker sessions is improving.

The remaining members of the core staff team, alongside the newly appointed manager, are committed to offering a good service and have remained focused on safeguarding children. This has meant that shortfalls have not been serious or widespread.

Staff have helped one child to make a positive move to a foster placement. An independent reviewing officer said, 'Staff definitely supported the child with the progress of her care plan and with a positive transition to her new placement.' In addition, plans for another young person to make a smooth transition from the home are progressing well.

Children who have previously been resistant to support from external agencies have been encouraged and well supported to access specialist health services.

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

Staff have not always responded well when safeguarding incidents have occurred. The responses to these incidents were not good enough because staff lacked confidence, experience and skills.

On one occasion, staff did not immediately notice that a vulnerable child had left the home without permission. As a result, safeguarding measures were not put in place quickly enough.

There has been a lack of clarity about roles and expectations in relation to multi-agency safeguarding work. In some cases, staff responsibilities are not clearly defined or understood. This has the capacity to reduce the effectiveness of children's safety plans.

On the whole, staff have protected children. This is particularly the case in relation to risks associated with peers in the community and criminal exploitation. Some children have stabilised their behaviours and are less vulnerable since moving to the home. Some children's risk-taking behaviours have reduced. Children's risks are well known, and risk reduction strategies are in place. However, these strategies have not always been successful. For example, children have gained access to illegal drugs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The acting manager is new in post and is yet to be registered with Ofsted. Staff shortages, combined with the unsettled period in the home, have meant that she has had to prioritise the day-to-day care of children. This has impacted on her ability to carry out some key management roles. There is a lack of management review and oversight of the home's functioning. Weaknesses in quality assurance systems mean that it is difficult for managers to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the home.

The manager has identified shortfalls at the home but has not yet fully addressed them. For example, property damage and graffiti have not been responded to in a timely manner. In addition, systems and routines that had been in place, such as daily bedroom checks, are no longer being followed.

As well as the disruption caused by high staff turnover and a new manager, staff have also worked through the introduction of a new online recording system. This has led to difficulties in accessing records because some have been archived, some remain in paper form and some are on the new system. It is clearly imperative that systems are in place to ensure that records are accessible. The manager is yet to be trained on the new online system, even though she has been in post since early February 2019.

Supervision, team meetings and training are taking place. However, staffing shortages are impacting on this. For instance, staff are not always receiving regular one-to-one supervision, and some staff have not yet been able to complete all planned training.

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: 1240397

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: Janet Porter

Registered manager: Jacqueline Patel (left February the 4th 2019)

Inspector(s)

Bev Allison, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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