

1257101

Registered provider: The Drive Care Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to three children. The home cares for children with learning disabilities and other associated complex needs, including some physical difficulties. The home provides planned and emergency short- and long-term placements.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in August 2017.

There were three children living at the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 January 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 18 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/05/2021	Full	Good
04/12/2019	Full	Good
08/01/2019	Full	Good
06/02/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress from their starting points. Children are in education, and staff support them to improve their independent living skills. They receive individualised care that meets their needs. However, the work completed by staff with children to support them is not fully demonstrated in children's records.

Planning for children's transition to adulthood needs to improve. One young person turned 18 years old on the day of this inspection. The plan for the young person is for them to remain living at the home. However, the young person's care plan does not include details of this or demonstrate why this is in the child's best interests.

Children develop strong and trusting relationships with staff. All three children are non-verbal and reliant on staff understanding their needs. Staff are attentive and skilled in interpreting what children are conveying.

Children can express their views about their day-to-day care and the home. For example, children express their preferences about activities, meal choices and the decoration of their bedrooms. Children are helped to express their wishes and feelings through communication methods specific to their needs, such as symbols and pictures.

Children's health needs are met well by staff. Staff support children to attend medical appointments and ensure that they have access to specialist advice, including child and adolescent mental health services or hospital specialists. Staff also ensure that children take their medication as prescribed. Staff manage children's medication safely.

Staff understand that it is important for children to maintain relationships with the people who are special to them. Parents and other family members are warmly welcomed into the home, and staff support and arrange for children to spend quality time with their family when it is safe for them to do so.

Despite their complex needs, the children are encouraged to participate in activities in the home and the community. During school holidays, children have enjoyed trips to Southend-on-Sea and a theme park. Staff capture these moments by taking photos that are kept to contribute to the children's life story.

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

The manager and staff demonstrate a good understanding of children's needs and vulnerabilities. Children receive one-to-one support, which significantly minimises the risk of harm. Children's risk assessments are reviewed regularly. They include all known risks and set out specific actions regarding how staff should respond to and manage these risks.

Staff try to understand the triggers for challenging behaviour and effectively de-escalate situations as they arise. Children benefit from the consistent boundaries that the manager and staff provide. Subsequently, incidents of unwanted behaviour are infrequent. Incident records are detailed and provide a clear description of what happened and the action taken by staff to manage the incident. Staff are trained to restrain children safely when required.

Staff have received safeguarding training and demonstrate a good understanding of the safeguarding policies and procedures. Although no allegations have been made since the home was registered, staff know what to do if allegations are made. This means that staff are able to respond appropriately to any safeguarding concerns. However, some staff members do not demonstrate a good understanding of the home's whistle-blowing policy.

Safer recruitment and employment practices are followed and ensure that only suitable staff are employed. For staff who have recently arrived in the United Kingdom, reference checks are robust. However, more could be done to assure the provider of staff's suitability when overseas police checks cannot be obtained.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced, qualified and skilled registered manager. The leaders, managers and staff demonstrate a genuine commitment to the children in their care and strive to make a positive difference to their lives. The number of staff working at the home is sufficient to meet children's needs, and agency staff are not used. This provides a consistent level of care and a family-style home environment for the children.

Children's records show evidence of management oversight. Furthermore, leaders and managers use learning from practice and feedback to improve the experiences and care of children. For example, the manager has strengthened the daily recording process to enable staff to report better on the work they carry out with children.

Leaders and managers work well with children's families and other agencies to support the day-to-day care of children. However, children do not have up-to-date local authority care plans. This compromises staff's understanding of the children's needs.

Staff report that they feel well supported by leaders and managers, who are available and approachable. Staff receive training that is relevant to the needs of the children in their care. They benefit from induction, regular supervision and appraisals. However, records of appraisals provide a one-dimensional view of staff's practice with very few targets set. This potentially limits the impact of appraisals on improving staff's practice and development.

Leaders and managers consider carefully new referrals to prevent them accepting children whose needs cannot be met in the home. However, records of placement and pre-admission risk assessments do not seem to reflect all of the information gathered. These documents fail to consider the impact a new child moving into the home will have on the children already living there.

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
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, audits should lead to consistent improvement in the quality and consistency of documents, such as key-work sessions.	12 February 2023
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;	27 January 2023

manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and

plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority;

that each child's relevant plans are followed.
(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(c))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that impact risk assessments consider all known risks as well as the impact a new child moving into the home will have on the children already living in the home. Additionally, transition plans should be in place for all children reaching adulthood, and children should have up-to-date local authority care plans.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to respond appropriately when an allegation is made about a senior member of staff. In particular, this relates to ensuring that staff are familiar with the home's whistle-blowing procedures. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)
- The registered person should ensure that they maintain good employment practice, as set out in regulations 31 to 33. In particular, this relates to the consideration of what additional safety measures could be taken for staff who have recently arrived from outside of the United Kingdom. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that the appraisal enables an in-depth review of staff's performance, including the views of the supervisor, supervisee and, when appropriate, others. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: 1257101

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Drive Care Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: Cyrinus House, 18 Hatherley Road, Sidcup DA14 4BG

Responsible individual: Emmanuel Akpan

Registered manager: Abisola Sanni

Inspector

Aneta Wasilewska, Social Care Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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