

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 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 two children and one young adult living at the home at the time of this inspection.

During the visit, the inspectors were aware that a serious incident was under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, the inspectors considered the actions the home has taken in response to the incident, alongside other relevant evidence available to them.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 17 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/10/2023	Full	Good
10/01/2023	Full	Good
18/05/2021	Full	Good
04/12/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Staff know the children well and are proud of the progress that they make. Staff show children emotional warmth and affection. Children are supported to form close and trusting relationships with staff. However, the experiences of one child have been affected by two significant events that put the child at risk of significant harm. This compromises professionals' and parents' confidence in the quality of care this child receives. As a result, the placing local authority has increased the frequency of social work visits to the child.

Children attend school regularly and staff support school transport as needed. Children are encouraged and supported to develop their independence skills, such as in attending to their personal care, dressing or cooking. This has helped children to learn and develop important life skills.

Children are supported to take their medication and attend health appointments. Staff ensure that children have access to specialist advice and support, including child and adolescent mental health services or a dietician.

The staff and managers ensure that children spend time with their families in person and virtually. As a result, children are sustaining and developing relationships with those who are important to them.

Leaders and managers have invested in some redecoration and development of the home. For example, a playroom in the garden is being turned into a sensory room. However, one child's bedroom had a smell of urine when the inspector visited. Records indicated that the child had an accident two days earlier. The issue was addressed during this inspection, but the lack of quick action detracts from creating a homely environment.

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

Safeguarding practice in the home needs to be strengthened. Children receive a minimum of one-to-one support, which significantly minimises the risk of harm to children. Staff failed to consistently supervise one child as outlined in their care plans. As a result, this child was able to leave the home unnoticed by staff on two occasions. On one of these occasions, staff did not notice the child was on the roof until a member of the public notified staff. During the second incident, the child was also found by a member of the public. Due to the child's individual vulnerabilities, this child was at risk of significant harm.

Feedback from external professionals and parents about the home's safeguarding practices is variable. Following the recent incidents with one child, one parent said that

they cannot be sure that their child is safe in the home. The child's social worker said that they have 'completely lost confidence' in the provider. In contrast, professionals and parents for the other child and the young adult in the home have not raised safeguarding concerns related to their care or supervision. In addition to the concerns, some professionals said that they would like more detailed communication, for example about any significant events or marks noticed on a child.

Despite these incidents, managers and staff demonstrate a good understanding of the needs and vulnerabilities of the children in their care. Children's risk assessments and behaviour support plans are reviewed regularly and have been updated following the recent incidents. They include known risks and set out specific actions of how staff should manage these risks. As a result, staff have access to guidance about how to keep children safe.

Staff have completed safeguarding training and demonstrate a good understanding of policies and procedures to follow if allegations are made against staff. All allegations are reported to the relevant safeguarding professionals and are investigated appropriately.

Safer recruitment and employment practices are followed to ensure that only suitable staff work at the home. However, more could be done to assure the provider of staff's suitability where they have recently arrived in the United Kingdom.

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

The leadership and management, and staffing, in the home are stable and consistent. The registered manager is experienced and suitably qualified. Since the last inspection, the manager is now registered for two homes. When she is not on the premises, the team leader provides managerial oversight. This contributes to the managerial stability.

Leaders and managers respond quickly to concerns that are raised. Following the recent incidents, leaders and managers ensured that additional safeguarding measures were put in place to prevent similar incidents happening in the future. This includes raising the fence at the rear of the building, installing additional locks, and reviewing children's plans.

Children's records show evidence of management oversight. However, recording of significant incidents does not include important information, such as details of who was present or detailed timelines of incidents. These recording shortfalls undermine effective scrutiny of practice in the home.

Staff feel well supported by the registered manager. Staff benefit from regular supervision, team meetings and training. However, staff spoken to did not demonstrate good understanding of the training provided about working with a young adult in the home. This compromises staff's understanding of the young adult's changing needs.

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, The 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and 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)(a)(v)(vi)(b)) In particular, this refers to the registered person ensuring that the safety plans for children are followed, including supervision arrangements, and that staff take effective action to prevent children from the risk of harm.	16 May 2024
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))	16 July 2024

In particular, this refers to the registered person ensuring that any training delivered for staff is effective and enhances staff's knowledge and practice.	
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, this refers to the registered person ensuring that records of significant incidents contain all details needed to understand what has taken place.	16 July 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they maintain good employment practice, as set out in regulations 31 to 33. In particular, this relates to ensuring that leaders and the manager know and put in place additional safety measures and checks 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 children are provided with a nurturing and homely environment. In particular, this relates to ensuring that children's bedrooms are cleaned thoroughly and without delay if needed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that they maintain effective working relationships with children's placing authorities and other relevant persons. In particular, this relates to ensuring that any significant information about a child is shared without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.3)

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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