

1277584

Registered provider: De Novo Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned and managed by a private organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to three boys. The statement of purpose specifies that this home provides short- to medium-term placements, described as assessment, settling or emergency. The registered manager's post has been vacant since 24 May 2019. The intended registered manager is in the process of applying to Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 August 2019

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 29 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/01/2019	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
13: The leadership and management standard 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) and (2)(h))	30/09/2019
33: Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	30/09/2019
45: Review of quality of care The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.	30/09/2019

After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review (“the quality of care review report”).

The registered person must—

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(4)(a)(b) and (5))

Recommendations

- A child’s bedroom should not generally be entered without their permission, though it may be necessary to establish routines to allow for rooms to be cleaned regularly. Usually, rooms should only be searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. Immediate searching may be necessary where there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is a risk to the child’s or another person’s safety or well-being. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 16, paragraph 3.20). In particular, after any room search consider recording on a separate document outside of the incident report.
- 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). In particular, improve the collation of recruitment records to ensure that they are stored together.
- Staff should be familiar with the home’s policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child.

(‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4). In particular, ensure that care plan objectives are routinely recorded in one place and that handwritten records are legible.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from strong, positive relationships with the adults who care for them. Attentive staff prioritise the needs of children and are enthusiastic in their commitment to support children to feel comfortable and safe. Children receive warmth and affection from the staff. This enables them to feel secure enough as teenagers to accept and enjoy a nurturing approach, for example bubble baths prepared, home-cooked meals of their choice, shopping for teddy shaped crisps and badges sewn on favoured clothing.

Children recognise that this is a good home, with one description being ‘it’s amazing’. A child cited that the reasons why this home is so good are because of ‘the staff, the education and the opportunities’.

Children have a rekindled interest in their learning. Prior to coming to live in this home, children’s education has been disrupted, leading to non-engagement. Creative approaches have successfully engaged children with foundation skills and new interests. For example, a child was tasked to research a dream holiday within a set budget. This led to research on travel arrangements, hotels and cultural differences as the dream of visiting the tallest building in the world came to fruition with a holiday in Dubai. Skills in mathematics were developed as compromises had to be made to come within the budget. Closer to home, skills in geocaching, construction and completing application forms have contributed to children’s education. The provider is in the process of applying to the Department for Education to register premises in the grounds as an independent school.

Children are increasingly feeling settled in this home and reducing negative behaviours. At times, children do present with attitudes of disrespect towards the staff team, acting out what they may have experienced in their early childhood or observed from other teenagers. After such incidents, the staff continue to show warmth and affection, telling the children that they care for them and will continue to take the necessary action to keep them and others safe. Through this nurturing, children are talking more openly with staff members and incidents of disrespect and damage to the home have significantly reduced.

Children are supported to keep in touch with family and friends who are important to them. Despite the distances, every effort is made to maintain significant relationships. For example, staff drive for 70 miles each way, twice a week, to support a child in maintaining positive links with his family and membership of a youth group. Birthday outings and special occasions include friends and family, where appropriate. Family members report high levels of satisfaction with this home. They feel included in their

child's care planning and recognise the progress that they are making. One family member summed up progress by saying, 'He used to go one step forward and five steps back. Now he is five steps forward and one back.'

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

Risk management is good. The manager's approach is to avoid being too restrictive and risk-averse, building on the strength of relationships between the children and staff. For example, children have opportunities for adventurous activities with professional instruction and equipment. Use of a barbecue, a fire pit and wading in the stream enable the children to enjoy spending time safely in the extensive grounds of the home.

Incidents of children going missing are reducing. When children are at risk by failing to return to the home, the staff continue with their nurturing approach and actively search for them. Staff demonstrate how much they care by sending text messages such as 'Where have you gone fella? I am worried about you.' When missing from the home, children sometimes engage in drinking alcohol, smoking and substance misuse. The response to these safeguarding concerns is to have meaningful conversations and a review of free time boundaries. These boundaries are generally effective and incidents of the children going missing are reducing. Some staff members worked previously in the specialist area of substance misuse. This knowledge is available to inform and support children to reduce and avoid this level of self-harm. When staff are concerned about substance misuse, appropriate room searches are undertaken to reduce the risks of harm. Records of any search are made within an incident report. This hinders the effective monitoring of such practice and separate records are recommended.

Children learn that there are consequences to their actions. A positive approach to support children to reflect on inappropriate behaviours is to engage them in putting it right. Damage to the home is repaired with the help of children, resulting in respect for the results of their do-it-yourself and decorating skills. Damage within the village led to children cleaning and repairing to correct what they had done. This results in an improved relationship with the local community as the children become aware of the importance of being a good citizen.

Physical intervention and restraint are avoided where possible. The six records confirm that each intervention was minimal and effective at keeping children and staff safe. Safeguarding concerns and allegations are reported to external agencies appropriately, ensuring that child protection procedures are followed.

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

The management of this home lacks stability. Since the last inspection, there have been three managers in six months. The succession plan for a manager to replace the registered manager did not work out as expected in April 2019, and subsequently the registered manager resigned in May 2019. A month later, an established team member was promoted into the management role and he is in the process of applying to Ofsted. Staff express their support for this manager and welcome the structure and boundaries

that he has introduced.

Management tasks are delayed and incomplete because of the turnover of managers. Since the last inspection, on 29 January 2019, staff have not received regular supervision. The current manager recognised this and met with staff in June to address this shortfall. However, the impact of school holidays and staff leave means that the momentum has been lost.

Monitoring of records and development of the home require improvement. One positive outcome from the last inspection is that agency staff are rarely employed. The commitment to provide children with consistent care from adults who know them involves the manager, and the responsible individual, supporting the children directly. The consequence of this commitment is the slippage on management tasks. The lack of time to analyse care practices and to reflect on the operation of the home has resulted in the failure to complete a quality of care review as required under the children's homes regulations. Records of staff recruitment are not stored in one place and lack order to monitor effectively.

Care planning records and children's risk assessments are clear documents and up to date. Records of progress are captured along with photographs, praise and rewards. Care plan objectives are recorded in two different places with the potential for confusion. Records need to be further improved by handwritten entries being legible. Records must be helpful to children whether they read them now or in the future.

Progress has been made to meet one requirement and three recommendations from the last inspection. Staff duty rosters show accurately who has worked in this home and there is a clear procedure to gain full information from an agency, ready for when an agency member of staff is required. Staff have gained knowledge and skills to help children understand the dangers and risks in the misuse of substances, alcohol and tobacco. When children return to the home after being missing from care, they have a return home interview by someone independent of the home. One requirement to use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the home is repeated from this inspection.

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: 1277584

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: De Novo Care Limited

Registered provider address: Bank Green House, Fox Lane, Holmesfield, Dronfield, Derbyshire S18 7WG

Responsible individual: Dermot Gascoyne

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Clare Davies: social care inspector

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