

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 manager has been registered since May 2018.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 January 2019

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

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

Date of last inspection: This is the first inspection since the home was registered on 21 May 2018.

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

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))	28/02/2019
37: Other records Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, ensure that there is a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working in the home, and a record of the actual rosters worked.	28/02/2019

Recommendations

- Staff should have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children understand, and where necessary work to change, negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being such as, but not limited to, nutrition and healthy diet, exercise, mental health, sexual relationships, sexual health, contraception and use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)
- 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 homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30) In particular, document all contact made with the placing authority to request return home interviews and challenge when such interviews are not offered.
- 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, when employing agency staff, obtain from the agency written evidence of the agency worker's experience and suitability to work at this home.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is the first inspection of the home since it was registered. The aims and purpose of the home are to provide a safe place for children who are experiencing upheaval or unsettling influences in their lives. Consequently, the children require alternative care quickly and there is not always time for them to visit this home before arriving. Living here is effective for most children. For example, children have successfully achieved a reduction in substance misuse, a reduction in criminal activity and improved mental health. Seven children have lived here since the home opened in May 2018. Children receive unconditional care and support from a dedicated staff team. There is an emphasis on the development of positive relationships between children and the adults who care for them. Children are supported well to feel safe at this home to enable them to develop their self-esteem.

Children benefit from a member of staff who is employed specifically to promote their education. This qualified practitioner undertakes assessments to measure the children's emotional resilience, and their abilities in numeracy and literacy. Liaison with external education providers and virtual headteachers identifies the type of provision needed. While waiting for a place at school or college, the designated member of staff ensures that children are provided with a timetable of learning activities. Collaboration with care

staff is strong as they work together to engage children with their timetables.

Due to the significant early childhood trauma most children have experienced, it can take time for them to settle at this home and accept the care and support available. Initial progress can be hindered through the child's lack of engagement. The manager and staff team are relentless in their drive and creativity to get children involved with learning opportunities through activities. Some children have positively engaged with the support available and successfully moved on to independent living while studying at college. However, there have been occasions when some children have not been appropriately matched to this home. In these instances, children's negative behaviours have escalated, putting themselves and others at risk. Consequently, some children have moved without making significant progress in their personal development.

Children engage well in a wide range of activities, where they try new experiences such as vert skating, boxing and climbing. They can receive professional coaching from successful sports people who work with young people. Such positive encouragement helps children to believe in themselves as they become successful with their new skills. These opportunities promote a 'can do' attitude and encourage children to make positive choices towards their aspirations.

On arrival at this home, children often need help to develop healthy lifestyles, as they struggle with disturbed sleep patterns, poor diet and lack of exercise. Children benefit from the care and support arranged to address these matters through a timetable of physical activity and home cooking. Children enjoy adventurous activities, such as off-road cycling and go-karting, which use lots of energy to assist in the establishment of a good night's sleep.

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

Risk is understood well by the manager and staff team. Care plans and risk assessments provide useful guidance and support to staff to manage difficult behaviours with a consistently nurturing approach. Safeguarding concerns are suitably managed and appropriately referred to external agencies.

At the time of this inspection, incidents of children going missing from the home were very low. Indeed, a social worker was pleased to report that since living at this home their child has not gone missing – something that occurred frequently at his previous residential home. When children do go missing, staff actively search for them and try to keep in touch. Records are made, forming a chronology of the period of missing from the home. However, such records do not always include the time that the child returned; this is recorded elsewhere.

The manager requests that local authority social workers provide return home interviews; however, these do not always occur. Records do not fully evidence how the manager has challenged the local authorities to carry out these interviews. In the absence of a full chronology, and lack of return home interviews, there is the potential to overlook significant information towards the reduction of children going missing.

Incidents of unsettled behaviour have led to damage within the home and grounds. The use of physical intervention is kept to a minimum. The six records confirm that each intervention was minimal and effective at keeping children and staff safe. The manager

and staff team are skilled in using de-escalation techniques to help and support children when they are extremely upset. One child has experienced a restrictive environment in a previous children's home. As a result, there is a period of unsettled behaviour as he adapts and accepts the caring and nurturing approach from staff here. This home provides unconditional care, with minimal restrictions, where restraint is avoided, and the communal areas of the home are not locked.

Some children arrive at this home with a history of drinking alcohol, smoking and substance misuse. The staff team received some initial training during their induction about these risks to children's health and have been using these skills to support children to reduce such risk-taking behaviour. While there has been a reduction within the home, the risks remain higher when children are out in the community visiting friends. Further staff training is required to identify current local risks of exploitation and the prevalence of county lines.

Leaders and managers adopt safer recruitment procedures when employing staff, to ensure their suitability to work with children. On occasion, an agency has provided staff at times of staff shortages. The manager obtains written evidence of agency staff being trained in safeguarding and behaviour management. However, details about their experience are given verbally and not included in writing with their training records. Full details about agency staff are required for leaders and managers to assess that they are suitable to work at this home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced in managing a children's home and he is suitably qualified. Leaders and managers have recognised the need to strengthen the management of the home and, through succession planning, have appointed a home manager in addition to the registered manager. The home manager has applied to Ofsted to become the registered manager; this is to enable the current registered manager to become an operational manager.

Staff retention is good. The staff team employed before this home became operational has barely changed. The staff speak highly of the two-week induction they had together for training, team building and establishing the ethos of the home. Following this comprehensive induction, the provider tested staff members' knowledge about their learning. This quality assurance process also checked the quality of the training delivered.

Staff are very enthusiastic about their work, and report that they are supported well through supervision and training. 'I have never worked anywhere where I have had so much support,' reports a member of staff. Another staff member says the manager's commitment to the home is 'unquestionable'. Recent training on understanding and managing incidents of self-harm was very successful, and there are plans for the next training on attachment theory.

The monitoring of care practices is undertaken by leaders and managers. Some lack of oversight has been identified through this inspection with regards to records of missing from home incidents, the staff rota and details for agency staff. The staff rota has not been maintained when there have been changes. Other records in the home identify who is working, and for what period of time; however, the rota does not reflect the

actual staffing arrangements.

Leaders, managers and staff are committed to the development of this home. They reflect and learn from their experiences. For example, the original purpose of the home was to offer 10-week placements. Leaders and managers recognised that many children need a longer period to settle and form positive relationships before they can make progress. As a result, the statement of purpose was amended.

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: Daniel Walker

Inspector

Clare Davies, social care inspector

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