

SC005553

Registered provider: Dalepeak Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This private children's home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The manager has been registered since August 2012.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 January 2020

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: 31 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/10/2018	Full	Good
24/10/2017	Full	Good
22/03/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
29/11/2016	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
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1)(2)(a) and (5))	31/03/2020
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (2)(a)(i)). In particular, the registered manager should ensure that education plans are updated and requested from the placing authority.	31/03/2020

Recommendations

- Children should be actively encouraged to read their records and to add further information to them. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.6). With reference to young people adding their comments and their understanding of key documents that are kept on their file.
- Regulations 35-39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. Case records must be kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3). With reference to the registered manager ensuring that placement plans and other relevant documents are signed by managers.
- Observation, monitoring or surveillance of children must not remove reasonable privacy, and should allow as much privacy as is possible, including in dressing, washing and using the toilet. A record must be kept of all observations in bedrooms to ensure that children are not subject to unnecessary invasions of their privacy. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 19, paragraph 3.36). With reference to providing appropriate curtains and/or blinds in young people's bedrooms to maintain privacy.
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11).

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people receive good quality care on a day-to-day basis. Young people feel safe and happy in their home and have secure attachments with staff. The inspector spoke to three young people about their lived experiences. Young people spoke fondly about the staff and the home. The inspector could hear lots of laughter and good conversation between staff and young people during the inspection. Young people have positive relationships with staff. The home presents as a warm and nurturing environment for young people to thrive. One young person said, 'I love being at the home. Everyone gets on like a big family. Sometimes, we bicker like brother and sister but that is normal. I love living here.'

The home provides an ideal living environment for young people, including a separate games room where young people can play video games or watch a DVD. Young people are encouraged to keep their own rooms tidy for a small financial reward. One young person informed the inspector that she would like some additional curtains as she feels exposed. Her room faces a busy main road. A recommendation has been raised to address this matter. The young person would also like one of her walls to be painted

in pink, her favourite colour. It is important that young people are consulted and given choices about their living environment, and any repairs are addressed and broken furniture is replaced with swift action.

Staff support contact arrangements for young people to see family members. This ensures that young people can keep links with family and friends. Staff are strong advocates for young people, and in one instance, helped a young person make a formal complaint to the placing authority.

Young people make good progress with their health and education. All young people are registered with local services in relation to their primary health needs. One young person is encouraged to meet with the looked-after children's nurse for some additional work on healthy relationships. The home has adopted a therapeutic approach to support the emotional needs of young people. The in-house therapist offers support and guidance to staff to assist them to understand the emotional needs of young people in greater depth.

All young people access education and/or training and have education plans. One young person is thriving in school and has become a school prefect. It is important that up-to-date education plans are kept on young people's files. The content of some education plans is brief and does not give a full picture of education outcomes or future options. This is especially important for two young people who are unsettled with their education and would benefit from a clearer plan.

Due to the ages and varying needs of young people, staff say that it is not always possible to have house meetings with all the young people present at the same time. Staff report that individual consultations take place with young people. Wishes and feelings work is important to help young people have a voice and express how they feel. This is important for those children who may be reaching the age of independent living but may not be sure where they want to live.

During the inspection year, one young person chose to return home. Her records had been archived, so the inspector was unable to look at transition planning for her. However, staff have started the process to help one young person prepare for her future with an independent plan focused on basic self-care and budgeting. The young person is expected to get herself up for education in the morning. However, on occasions, the young person has not managed to do this, resulting in her missing her education. Young people would benefit from realistic goals, so they are able to manage any expectations placed on them.

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

Young people are helped and protected, and all young people have detailed risk assessments. Clear, detailed plans help staff to understand any associated risk and behaviours and can help to keep young people safe. Staff have followed missing-from-care protocols when a young person has not returned home and have taken appropriate action to ensure that safeguarding measures are in place. For one young person, episodes of going missing have significantly reduced. She is investing in her placement,

and building positive, trusting relationships with staff.

The home has adopted a therapeutic model based on building secure behavioural attachments. The in-house therapist helps to design clinical plans for each young person. Clinical plans help to inform the therapeutic work for staff to complete. Key-work sessions are varied. Staff have discussions with young people and these have been noted as key-work sessions. Staff do more intensive work around healthy relationships and life-story work, with the input of clinical guidance from the clinical plans. Some staff are confident with this new method of practice, but some less so. Lack of confidence on the part of staff and/or uncertainty about the therapeutic model can make it difficult to repair relationships with young people when emotive subjects are discussed.

No physical interventions have been necessary to manage behaviours. Young people have mutually respectful relationships with staff. Sanctions and rewards are in place. For one young person, a restriction of devices plan is in place to manage sexually harmful behaviours. Although this may be necessary for short-term management of incidents, the young person would benefit from long-term specialist therapeutic intervention, and education on the safer use of devices and associated risks. This young person is waiting for therapeutic input from universal services. However, there has been a delay in accessing therapeutic support.

The home uses an electronic recording system to keep a record of all reports and key-work sessions. Some reports, such as placement plans, have not been signed by young people or managers. Records should be accessible to young people and the home is advised to ensure that electronic records are accessible and child-friendly. A recommendation has been made to address this matter.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

An experienced registered manager and his deputy manager manage the home. Leaders and managers show an ambitious vision and have high expectations for the young people in their care. Both senior managers have worked at the home for many years, demonstrating their dedication and commitment to young people. Leaders and managers speak highly of the young people, and provide a culture of warmth and mutual respect. A parent said, 'They [staff] have done a really good job with [name]. Since she has been at [name of home], she has really changed. She has really changed for the positive. It's nice to have the old [name] back.'

The registered manager shows strong advocacy skills and good partnership working on behalf of young people. There have been delays in care planning for young people in the absence of social workers. Where appropriate, the manager has challenged this. However, further escalation is advisable to reach a satisfactory conclusion for young people requiring specialist therapeutic input, and further clarity with education plans. There has already been some management oversight about the signing of important, relevant records, such as placement plans. A recommendation has been made to address this matter.

Staff are passionate and committed and have a good understanding of young people. A

young person said, 'Staff are really helpful, and I don't think I could have done it without them. It's homely, even though it is a big house. I am happy here.' Staff speak positively about their role and the management team. Retention of staff is difficult, and the manager acknowledges this. However, he is committed to finding the right people to work at the home.

There is ongoing training for staff and managers provide training, support and supervision to all staff. There is a detailed induction training package for all new staff. All staff welcome the open door policy of senior managers. Some staff report a lack of confidence using the therapeutic model. The manager acknowledges that there has been insufficient training, and staff would benefit from further training if the model is to be effective.

The registered manager uses external monitoring of the home from regular visits by an independent visitor. A requirement has been made to improve the quality of reports to ensure that the reports are evaluative and have clear recommendations for improvement; more importantly, that the views of young people are included.

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: SC005553

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Dalepeak Limited

Registered provider address: Richard House, 9 Winckley Square, Preston PR1 3HP

Responsible individual: Andrew O'Reilly

Registered manager: John Allen

Inspector

Kamal Bhamra, social care inspector

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