

# SC006294

Registered provider: Dove Adolescent Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home that is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 15 to 16 August 2017

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

**requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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:** 10 March 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Improved effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection**

None

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- Procedures for allegations against staff are not always followed. Allegations are not always reported to the designated officer in a timely way.
- The home's policy for reporting allegations is not in line with government guidance.
- Records of discussions and actions in relation to allegations are not always recorded.
- Staff have not followed their own complaints procedure.
- Staff are not always clear about physical interventions. This has led to some interventions not being recorded.

The children's home's strengths:

- Staff show genuine care for the young people and are committed to supporting young people and their progress.
- Young people have made progress from their starting points.
- The stable staff team is focused on young people's needs.
- Young people are supported to attend their education provision. They have attained academic qualifications and have clear goals and aspirations.
- Missing from home episodes have reduced and are managed well by staff.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 10/03/2017      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness |
| 17/08/2016      | Full            | Good                   |
| 26/01/2016      | Full            | Outstanding            |
| 08/09/2015      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness |

## 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 with the given timescales.

| Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Due date   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>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—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</li> </ul> <p>that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (2)(vi)(e))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 15/12/2017 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the name of the child;</li> <li>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</li> <li>the date time and location of the use of the measure;</li> <li>a description of the measure and its duration;</li> <li>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</li> <li>the name of the person who used the measure ('the user'), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</li> <li>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</li> <li>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered as a result of the measure;</li> </ul> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure; the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person')—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</li> <li>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate.</li> </ul> | 15/12/2017 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all physical interventions where a young person is restricted from free movement are recorded.</p> |            |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39(3))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all complaints and their outcomes are recorded.</p>                                                                                                                               | 15/12/2017 |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40(4)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all allegations against staff are reported to Ofsted.</p>                                                                                         | 15/12/2017 |

## Recommendations

- Each local authority should have clear arrangements in place for the management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children. The relevant officer or teams within the local authority should be informed promptly of all allegations that come to an employer's attention or that are made directly to the police. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.18) In particular, all allegations should be reported to the designated officer whether there is police involvement or not.

## Inspection judgements

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

Young people benefit from good relationships with staff and are able to go to particular staff members if they have any problems. One young person was confident in asking the staff for help when they received inappropriate contact through social media. Staff know the young people well and are focused on helping them to achieve good outcomes.

The home has a clear complaints procedure and young people know how to make a complaint. There has been one complaint from a young person in this inspection period. However, their complaint form was lost and therefore no action was taken. This leaves young people without the opportunity to have their views heard and with potentially unresolved issues.

The home is spacious, well decorated and welcoming for young people. They have their own large rooms and private space to keep personal belongings. Young people feel settled and safe in their home. They are involved in shopping for food and in planning activities. Young people feel included, and they are developing trusting bonds with staff.

Good care planning ensures that young people's needs are identified and met. Staff work hard to engage young people in their plans. Young people know their plans for the future and talk with confidence and pride about their progress. As a result of this progress, one young person now has a plan to return home. A young person said, 'I'm happy here. I didn't like it at first but the staff are really good. If I could pick up this home and put it closer to my family, I would.'

Staff are resilient and committed to improving difficult relationships with family members. This has led to better communication and increased contact for one young person and their family. As a result, the young person has invested in her progress and now has a plan to return to live in her local area closer to family.

Prior to their placement, young people were not progressing in their academic studies. All young people are engaged in education and are making good progress. Due to the support and encouragement that they receive, young people have done well in their exams. This empowers young people to increase their self-esteem and confidence and make plans for their future.

The home has the capacity to support four young people. At present, there are two young people living at the home. The manager and staff are committed to providing care and support to the current residents. They have not accepted other young people into the home at this time as they recognise that this may limit the progress of the current young people.

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

Young people live in a safe home environment that meets their physical needs. They have staff involved in their care whom they can speak to openly about any concerns that may arise. However, there have been three allegations made against staff by one young person. Although the young person involved has a history of making false allegations against staff, the allegations were not reported to the designated officer in a timely way to support an independent investigation. This leaves young people exposed to possible harm, and staff open to further allegations. In addition, recording of allegations is not always completed thoroughly.

The staff said, and records demonstrate, that there have been no physical interventions with young people in over a year. However, staff advise that there have been a number of low level 'guided holds' that they use with young people but do not consider as physical intervention. Consequently, they are not recorded. This leaves staff vulnerable and exposed to further allegations and young people without an accurate account of

their care.

Staff try to keep young people safe and, where appropriate, apply restrictions to young people's internet access. However, this is hindered when family members provide young people with a mobile phone. Due to the young person's ability to access the internet, there has been unwanted and inappropriate contact from strangers. The staff team gives consistent messages regarding safety, and they try to ensure one young person's safety by limiting their free time.

There is a clear plan for when young people go missing from the home. Staff follow this accordingly every time a young person goes missing from the home. Good links with the local police, local authority and other homes help them to locate the missing young people. One young person goes missing from the home frequently. The staff and manager are proactive and respond swiftly, using their knowledge of the local area to locate him. As a result, there is also regular communication between staff and members of the community. This gives a clear message that young people's safety is important.

Staff have an understanding of safeguarding procedures. Their focus is on keeping young people safe. Regular training ensures that staff continue to build on their skills. Staff work well with young people to help them understand risk and keep themselves safe. One young person has made progress in understanding risk and safety. Due to the targeted work by staff, the young person has gone to them for help. Staff responded swiftly and appropriately to an incident involving social media and contacted all the relevant agencies. This ensured the immediate safety of the young person and appropriate action against the adult perpetrator.

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

The registered manager has held her current role since 2009 and has over 17 years' experience of caring for children and young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. She holds the national vocational qualification level 4 in leadership and management.

The staff team members receive regular monthly supervision. They are able to talk to their manager formally and informally. Staff said that they feel supported by their manager and the deputy manager. However, staff are not always given the opportunity to discuss or reflect on the allegations made against them. There is no record of such discussions within their supervision. This leaves staff vulnerable when there is no formal record or discussion.

The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and can identify some weaknesses. However, the internal and external monitoring processes have missed certain shortfalls. In particular, the home's procedure for reporting significant incidents is not in line with 'Working Together' statutory guidance. The procedure is unclear and relies on a further management tier to make decisions. This has proved to be ineffective and led to allegations going unreported to the regulatory body and the designated officer.

The home has oversight from a monthly independent visitor, giving the manager an impartial, objective view. The reports are positive, and the visitor identified no shortfalls in this inspection period.

Gaps in addressing complaints mean that some are not responded to in writing. A complaint raised by a family member did not receive a response or resolution. This does not give young people or their family members a sense of value and is likely to contribute to them feeling that their concerns are not taken seriously.

There is a thorough matching process for young people coming to live at the home. The manager spends time talking to placing authorities and getting to know as much as she can about new young people. This, coupled with good planning, ensures that progress for young people continues and any new admissions get the same level of care.

The manager and staff develop good working relationships with placing agencies. Weekly communication and regular updates ensure that partner agencies can measure the progress of young people. A professional said, 'The communication from staff is excellent. They are all working together to keep [name of young person] safe.'

## **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 difference 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 who 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:** SC006294

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Dove Adolescent Services Limited

**Responsible individual:** Barbara Whittaker

**Registered manager:** Amanda Farnaby

## Inspector

Abigail Maspero, social care inspector

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