

SC018238

Registered provider: Dove Adolescent Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care for one child who may have social and emotional difficulties.

An interim manager is covering in the absence of the registered manager. Two children have lived at this home since the last inspection.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 March 2023

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: 16 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/11/2021	Full	Outstanding
18/02/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/04/2019	Full	Good
29/08/2018	Interim	Not judged

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The two children who have lived at the home since the last inspection have both made good, sustained progress in all areas of their lives.

Children's education is promoted through encouragement and praise. Staff ensure that all of the children's educational achievements are recorded and celebrated. This helps children to feel positive about themselves. Children are encouraged by staff to have aspirations for the future. One child recently achieved a full-time position in a career they wanted, and another child has gained an apprenticeship. There is very clear evidence of children succeeding.

Children are encouraged to take part in activities that support their personal interests. One child has played football for several local teams, and another child volunteers at a local animal sanctuary. These opportunities help children to make friends and have fun doing things they like to do.

Children who are nearing the age of independence receive a well-planned and coordinated approach. Children learn how to compare costs from utility companies, pay bills and understand how to manage money. They also learn practical skills, such as how to measure for curtains and turn off the stopcock in the event of a leak. Children learn the skills they need to successfully manage their own home when they become young adults.

Children are encouraged to lead active and healthy lifestyles. One child has specific dietary needs. Staff help them to understand how to eat well and know what foods to avoid. This is achieved through regular conversations that are backed up through activities and research. As a result, the child is learning to make informed choices.

Children's records, especially their care plans, do not capture their needs clearly or in a child-friendly way. This does not provide children with an understanding of the care they should expect to receive. Children's plans are open to interpretation about what staff should do to meet children's needs. This has led to one child receiving inconsistent messages from staff.

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

Staff develop and maintain positive, trusting relationships with children. The child who is currently living at the home told the inspector that they feel 'lucky to live here' because staff want what is best for them.

Incidents of self-harm have reduced. The manager and staff work with therapists and specialist services to seek advice and guidance. They have used this information to give one child the skills to manage their emotions better. The child feels better

understood because of the support they have received from staff. Consequently, their self-esteem is improving.

Children benefit from a consistent routine that reflects their age and development. If a child is struggling to engage in their routine, staff use fun and creative methods to keep the child involved. For example, one child was struggling to keep their room clean and tidy. Staff developed a dice roll game so that tasks were chosen at random. This helped the child to complete the task and feel a sense of achievement.

Room searches take place when concerns arise relating to a child's safety. Records are clear and include an appropriate amount of detail. Children are always informed when staff need to undertake a room search. This helps to ensure that children understand the reasons why staff have entered their private space.

Staff know and understand children's individual risks. Risk assessments contain a significant amount of information, some of which is not relevant. This means that the risk assessments are confusing to read and do not always tell staff what they must do. Additionally, at the time of the inspection, a significant and known risk for one child had not been assessed. As a result, the manager cannot be reassured that staff know exactly what is needed to keep the child safe.

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

The characteristics of good leadership and management are not currently in place at this home. The interim manager does not have a good day-to-day oversight of all aspects of the home. This means that the interim manager was not fully aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses.

When agency staff work during evenings and weekends, records are not consistently kept of their presence in the home. The interim manager does not always know who has worked in the home. This does not allow leaders and managers to have good enough oversight.

The recruitment of permanent staff is robust, and the manager ensures that staff employed have the right skills and qualities to care for children well. While there are procedures in place for the use of agency staff, these are not always followed. One agency staff who has worked in the home did not have the required checks in place. This means that not enough has been done by the interim manager to ensure that all staff coming into the home are suitably vetted.

Staff benefit from a wide range of training opportunities that support them to better understand the children they care for. When the manager identifies a gap in staff knowledge, training opportunities are identified. However, actions set by the manager are not routinely reviewed. Some staff remained untrained in a child's specific need for several months. Staff do not always have the knowledge they need to care for children effectively.

When other professionals' practice falls below what should be expected, the management response is variable. On one occasion, the previous manager strongly and successfully challenged a local authority when decisions were not in the child's best interests. However, for another child, the interim manager did not robustly challenge a decision made by a professional regarding a child's medication. This is not good practice and potentially hindered the child's understanding of their health.

Therapeutic approaches that are set out in the statement of purpose are not fully embedded. Staff do not understand and consistently apply these approaches in their day-to-day care of children. For example, staff have used unhelpful and stigmatising language when writing about children. This is not helpful to the children should they want to read what is written about them.

Overall, monitoring systems in the home are weak. Records are not robust. For example, children's risk assessments, care plans and incident records vary in quality. Ineffective monitoring does not help the manager to quickly identify where improvements are needed.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that all staff understand and consistently apply the therapeutic approach to care as set out in the home's statement of purpose.	10 May 2023
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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))	10 May 2023

In particular, the registered manager must ensure that children's individual risk assessments are accurate and kept up to date.	
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; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that staff are appropriately trained to meet the individual needs of the children they care for. The registered manager must ensure that day-to-day oversight is improved so that all information is reviewed and evaluated and shortfalls are addressed.	10 May 2023
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))	10 May 2023

In particular, the registered manager must ensure that children's plans are written in a way that clearly sets out the child's current needs and what staff need to do to meet these needs.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))	10 May 2023
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, the registered manager must ensure that accurate staffing records are kept when agency staff are working in the home.	10 May 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they act as a strong advocate when the local authority does not listen and respond to children's wishes without a reasonable rationale. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.4)
- The registered person should ensure that the child's bathroom has a family home environment, including children having free access to towels. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that children's plans are child-friendly and that language in children's records is non-stigmatising. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: SC018238

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Dove Adolescent Services Limited

Registered provider address: Malvern View, Saxon Business Park, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove B60 4AD

Responsible individual: Stacy Cooper

Registered manager: Alice Walton/ Dawn Briscoe (interim)

Inspector

Rachel Walker, Social Care Inspector

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