

SC018238

Registered provider: Dove Adolescent Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is a privately owned home and is registered for single occupancy for children and young people, irrespective of gender, who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home can accommodate children of any age; however, normally they are between 12 and 18 years old.

The admission process is robust and includes the completion of a referral risk assessment which allows the child's or young person's needs to be carefully considered to match with the experience and skill set of the staff team.

The staff team endeavours to create a warm and friendly atmosphere where individuals can feel safe and secure. The home reopened in October 2018 and a registered manager has been in post since that time.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 April 2019

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: 29 August 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: not judged

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/08/2018	Interim	Not judged
09/01/2018	Interim	Not judged
26/07/2017	Interim	Not judged
15/02/2017	Interim	Not judged

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children admitted to this home receive individualised care that is tailored to their complex needs, risks and vulnerabilities. This is because transitional arrangements are well planned, and children are welcomed into the home with empathy and compassion.

Staff understand the significance and impact for the children when they experience changes in their care. Staff endeavour to consult with children from the outset, and understand the importance of listening to and involving the children, and ascertaining their likes and dislikes. This has helped children to settle quickly. One child said: 'I have only recently arrived, but I feel at home here and have already gone on activities I enjoy.'

The manager and staff clearly have a good understanding of the barriers to learning, in particular for those children who have experienced severe trauma or significant disruption to their education. The staff members and the manager have played a key role in supporting children to engage in learning opportunities and maintain continuity in mainstream schooling. One child is being supported to sit their GCSEs despite the fact that they were moved from their home area at such a crucial time.

Children have made progress relative to their starting points and have improved their emotional well-being. Staff have worked diligently and perceptively with one child, using a 'small-steps approach'. Expectations of behaviour were realistic and this helped the child to reintegrate. The placement was ultimately disrupted, but there had been improvements in repairing earlier damage and developing attachments. A social worker said: 'Seeing [Name of child] respond and engage with her key worker is really positive. She listened to her and accepted what she said. There was a little bit of banter which [Name of child] does like. [Name of staff] clearly has good skills working with [Name of child].'

Maintaining contact with children's family and friends is clearly seen as a priority. Family relationships are nurtured and encouraged, and staff go 'above and beyond' in facilitating this. This has resulted in improved family contact, and has maintained links with the child's home area and supported the long-term plan.

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

Staff are proactive in reducing the duration and frequency of children's missing-from-home episodes. They have close working relationships with the police and work collaboratively in actively looking for children when they are missing. Staff are intuitive and the plans in place for reducing the duration and frequency of missing episodes are detailed and effective.

In addition, focused work has helped one child to understand the risks and

consequences associated with being missing and engaging in self-injurious behaviour. A senior police officer said: 'I do not usually compliment care homes; however, I personally feel that staff do everything they can to safeguard [Name of child] and provide the best possible care.'

Staff are skilled in recognising the triggers which cause one child to engage in self-harm. All staff have received specialist training in ligature removal and the manager has sought additional guidance and support. There is clear evidence that direct work and one-to-one staffing have led to a significant reduction in incidents, including other forms of self-harm. This demonstrates a significant improvement in the behaviours that the child displayed prior to moving to this home.

Responses to risk-taking behaviour, including assaults on staff, are underpinned by well-written risk assessments and behaviour management plans. Liaison within a multi-agency framework informs future planning and decisions are not made in isolation. The best interests and the safety and well-being of both the child and staff are given paramount importance in any decision-making.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has ambition and demonstrates her developing leadership skills combined with a 'hands-on' approach. The manager enhances and capitalises on the skills and experience of the staff, and actively promotes career progression. This has helped to keep staff motivated during some very challenging times.

Impact assessments are comprehensive and meaningful. The assessments inform the matching of the skills and experience of the staff team to the needs and vulnerabilities of the child. The staff felt prepared for, and confident about, accepting their first admission. Staff felt supported in managing very challenging behaviours, but the newness of the staff team was a contributory factor in the placement ending.

The manager and the staff team have engaged in reflection and team-building that have strengthened the home, and staff practice is now more consistent. Staff morale is good, and the staff are moving forward with enthusiasm and positivity. The environment of the home is warm and homely and the child in placement has immediately developed a good rapport with the manager and staff team.

Care planning is very child centred, and successfully captures the views and opinions of the child. Early intervention and planning within a multi-professional framework have set the scene for minimal disruption and continuity of care. The child commented in their statutory review that they felt listened to.

The manager is a good advocate for all children who are placed in her care. She will actively challenge when decisions made by others are not felt to be in a child's best interests.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: SC018238

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Dove Adolescent Services Limited

Registered provider address: 170 Southgate, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 1QJ

Responsible individual: Barbara Whittaker

Registered manager: Alice Walton

Inspector

Cath Sikakana: social care inspector

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