

SC033817

Registered provider: Direct Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There is an acting manager in post who is yet to be registered.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 June 2018

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 25 April 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/04/2017	Full	Good
12/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
17/05/2016	Full	Requires improvement
15/12/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. If no education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge them to meet the child's needs under regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are supported to make progress in all areas of their development, but are particularly well supported in reducing their risk-taking behaviours. A social worker said: 'The staff have done a remarkable job as the young person was in complete opposition to being in care.'

The acting manager has responded positively to the requirements made at the interim inspection and has addressed the shortfalls in relation to impact risk assessments. These assessments are now detailed, thorough and cover areas of potential risk and the actions required.

Consultation with children is positive and is evidenced in a number of ways. Staff know the children well and understand key plans in relation to behaviour management and risk. Key-work sessions are comprehensive and cover a number of subjects.

Staff provide a nurturing and empathetic environment that is supported by trusted relationships. This, combined with a comprehensive understanding of children's individual needs, contributes to good outcomes for children. Staff model positive relationships to children.

Children and families are supported to maintain positive and meaningful contact.

Key workers and managers track children's progress on a weekly and monthly basis. Communication with key agencies is effective.

Educationally, some children have made good progress from their starting points. One child is currently completing their GCSEs. Another child needs more support with their education. Staff have been creative in helping this child, and have tried to escalate the problems in education, but there could be more challenge of partner agencies when progress is not being made. A recommendation is made in respect of this.

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

The management team ensures that robust safeguarding processes are in place and are well understood by the staff team. The new acting manager has worked hard to refocus the staff team and place safeguarding at the centre of childcare practice in the home. This has addressed the previous shortfalls found at the interim inspection.

Staff ensure that children are safe. Thorough planning of risk assessments, key-work sessions and work with other agencies contributes to reduced risk-taking behaviours.

Children who have previously experienced high levels of missing from care and risks relating to child sexual exploitation have been supported to reduce these risks. There have been no incidents of children going missing from the home in recent months. This is a significant improvement and reflects the commitment of the staff team.

Children are kept safe from the risks associated with social media. Children's plans and risks are assessed on an individual basis and ongoing work is identified to keep children safe.

Multi-agency working has improved since the interim inspection. Closer working relationships are evidenced between staff, social workers and education providers. A social worker said: 'The staff have been really accommodating and communication is good.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The acting manager is approachable and makes herself available to staff and to children. The manager has made sure that the shortfalls identified at the last inspection have been addressed in a short period of time. A child said: 'I trust the manager with everything. She is trying to do a good job.'

Staff are provided with opportunities to reflect on their practice and to debrief. Staff report that they feel supported by managers and highlight that safeguarding is now clearly in focus. The manager and the deputy manager evidence that there are positive and constructive working relationships.

Staff have focused on whistleblowing procedures. This is now an ongoing agenda item for staff in their one-to-one supervision and in staff meetings. Staff training is thorough, well coordinated and well planned.

Staff supervision and team meetings have been given more priority. This includes increased frequency of team meetings to enable staff to focus on key areas of development. The organisation has supported the home well through this period of improvement.

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: SC033817

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Direct Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Goldwyns, Rutland House, 90 92 Baxter Avenue,
Southend On Sea SS2 6HZ

Responsible individual: Rebecca Ouellani

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Bev Allison, social care regulatory inspector

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