

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC033817
Inspector	Joanne Vyas
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Direct Care Limited
Registered person address	Direct Care Ltd PO Box 52 Peterborough PE8 9AZ

Responsible individual	Rebecca Ouellani
Registered manager	Duncan James MacKenzie
Date of last inspection	23/07/2014

Inspection date	10/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **declined in effectiveness**.

This home has declined in effectiveness since the last inspection due to the inadequate management arrangements when the Registered Manager is on leave and the way that young people's behaviours have been poorly managed. The home has gone through a turbulent period. Young people with complex behaviours have moved into the home and other young people have left in an unplanned way, due to their behaviour. Despite this, placing social workers and other external professionals praise the staff's commitment and collaborative working. A social worker said, 'The home has tried extremely hard. They did everything they could.'

The home has an experienced Registered Manager who provides strong leadership and support. He has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has a plan in place to further develop the home. However, the behaviour of young people has escalated in the last few weeks while the Registered Manager has been on leave. Staff have felt unsupported by the management arrangements during this time and say morale is low as a result. The home has been significantly damaged and young people have been in crisis throughout this period. The home had management cover during this absence; however, these arrangements seemed ineffective and poor decisions were made which may have compromised the safety of young people. For example, an agreement was made within a professionals meeting with regards to increased staffing levels for a young person, this was not adhered to when staff were unable to cover their shift. Furthermore, staff were not de-briefed after serious incidents to provide opportunities for reflective learning.

Management have made poor decisions during incidents with young people. This has led to young people putting themselves, staff and members of the public at serious risk of harm as well as leading to the arrest of a young person by the police. The police have stated that they have had 13 reported incidents in the last few weeks, eight of which they have responded to. This demonstrates that staff have been

unable to appropriately manage the behaviour of young people in this home over this period of time.

A number of staff have been temporarily transferred into the home recently from other homes belonging to the same organisation. These staff are experienced but are generally not known to the young people, and the staff do not know the young people well. The core team of staff has been reduced by sickness, leave and movement to other homes. On one occasion, staff from another home arrived very late which had a serious impact on the young people as they were unable to go out until the staff arrived. By this time young people were no longer in control of their behaviour; staff were assaulted, there was significant damage to the environment and young people, staff and members of the public were at risk of harm.

There has been a high level of physical intervention since the last inspection. This has been significant particularly in the last few weeks with a total of nine physical interventions occurring in one day. This further demonstrates the complexities of the young people being cared for and the struggle staff have in managing young people's behaviour positively. However, it should be noted that the physical intervention used was the minimum that could be used for the shortest possible time possible, and was only been used when there has been risk of harm to the young person, others or serious damage to property.

Young people say they like the home and get on well with each other and staff. External professionals report that young people make good progress in this home. However, events over the last few weeks have resulted in young people being arrested and removed from the home. Therefore, outcomes for young people have declined since the last inspection.

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and is registered to provide residential placements for up to four children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/07/2014	Full	good
25/02/2014	Interim	good progress
28/11/2013	Full	good
24/01/2013	Interim	good progress

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
9 (2001)	ensure the children's home is managed with sufficient care, competence and skill. This specifically refers to ensuring there are effective management arrangements in place during the absence of the Registered Manager (Regulation 9(1))	14/01/2015
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there and make proper provision for the care, supervision and, where appropriate, treatment, of children accommodated there(Regulation 11(1)(a)&(b)) *	14/01/2015
25 (2001)	ensure that there is at all times, having regard to the needs of the children accommodated there and the need to safeguard and promote the health and	14/01/2015

	welfare of the children accommodated in the home, a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the children's home. (Regulation 25(1))	
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure all staff are given an opportunity to discuss incidents of restraint they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by, with a relevant adult. (NMS 3.17)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.