

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC064027
Inspector	Michelle Spruce
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Delam Care Limited
Registered person address	Metropolitan House, 5th Floor 3 Darkes Lane POTTERS BAR Hertfordshire EN6 1AG
Responsible individual	Mark O'Donnell
Registered manager	Karen Patricia Danby
Date of last inspection	26/03/2014

Inspection date	17/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This good service provides young people with a safe and nurturing place to live. Their individual needs are met through careful care planning that assists staff to provide good quality care.

Young people demonstrate they feel safe through their body language, vocal sounds and facial expressions. They make no attempt to leave the home and are provided with good staffing levels that protect them from harm and potential risk.

Young people provide their view about the home using their preferred communication style. Staff assist and encourage participation to enable their voice to be heard. This helps young people to influence the care they receive and the home they live in.

The manager and staff team strive to improve the service. They work effectively with each other and external parties to gain feedback about how they can improve. They have good development plans for the future of the service that shows how they will continue to operate and what they will focus on. There were some minor shortfalls found during the inspection, none that have a direct impact on young people. As a result, two requirements and two recommendations have been made.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to six children and young people, who have a learning disability.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/03/2014	Interim	good progress
03/10/2013	Full	good
16/01/2013	Interim	good progress
07/11/2012	Full	good

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
5 (2001)	ensure the registered person shall notify HMCI of any such revision within 28 days (Regulation 5(a))	31/01/2015
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate appraisal. (Regulation 27(4)(a))	31/01/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of children. This is in relation to supervised contact (NMS 18.1)

- ensure there is a written or electronic record kept by the home detailing the time, date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, including the registered person. The record is signed by the supervisor and the member of staff at the end of the supervision. (NMS 19.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people sustain attachments because there is a stable consistent staff team that provide good quality care. Young people are more confident in themselves as a result of their long term stable placements. For example, one young person now makes informed choices about what he would like to wear. This means young people show a sense of identity. A parent said, 'She is doing really well; she is very settled and likes to be in her bedroom listening to music'.

Young people's health needs are met and supported well. They benefit from access to a range of health professionals who ensure their physical, emotional, and psychological needs are met. Some young people's health has improved as a result of a review of their medication. Young people are provided with well-balanced healthy meals that meet their dietary requirements. A staff member said, 'His health is generally good; he was severely underweight but has gained weight since being here'. Young people make choices about the food they want by using their preferred communication style. This enables them to contribute to the planning, cooking and shopping for meals.

All young people attend full time education. They have a school diary to keep information about their day. This informs the staff and home of any significant information needing to be exchanged. A staff member said, 'There is a school nurse at the school who attends to any medical needs. Young people have 100% attendance; they only take time off for medical reasons'.

Young people are encouraged to contribute to the local community. Some young people have attended the youth club. They enjoy being out in the community. This gives them a sense of belonging. Young people have contact with friends and family that are important to them. Staff make family members feel welcome when they visit. Staff also support supervised contact and provide reports to feed back to the social worker. A parent said, 'He has visits at home and likes being home; he is happy to go back with staff; this must be a good sign; I'm really pleased.

Young people make small steps towards life skills. They each have individual targets set at a pace that reflects their ability. For example, tasks such as putting washing into the machine and trying to help with the washing up are all promoted to encourage independence. This gives young people the confidence to take responsibility. Pathway plans are in place for young people who will soon be moving on. This helps young people to cope better with the transition and reduces anxiety and stress.

Quality of care

good

Staff provide a consistent good quality of care to vulnerable young people who depend on staff to care for them. The care provided is reflected in the positive outcomes achieved by young people and the feedback from parents, social workers and other professionals who work with them. Comments about the staff from parents say, 'The quality of care is excellent', another said, 'I can't fault it; staff are polite and caring.'

The manager and staff team have excellent relationships with schools, parents and social workers. Communication and information sharing is clear and concise. This effective partnership working supports the continued planning of care for each young person. The manager and staff team are highly thought of. A teacher said, 'We have strong relationships with staff due to the complex needs of young people; we see staff every day; we exchange information well'.

Young people develop strong bonds with staff over time. They demonstrate who they like and dislike through their behaviour. A staff member said, 'If he doesn't like you he will not co-operate; this shows his disapproval'. Young people have engaged well with each other and on occasion have shown their acceptance of each other. For example, one young person gave another peer their apple, this gift of sharing was a real breakthrough demonstrating the ability to break the social barrier that they faced. As a result, relationships are strengthened.

Young people are encouraged and supported to participate in meetings where their views, wishes and feelings are shared. Staff use signs, symbols and verbal communication to help them to communicate. As a result, activities are planned and menu choices are made. Key workers also work hard to ensure young people contribute to their plan of care and review. For example, monthly meetings are held and recorded, issues such as behaviour is explored using the individuals preferred communication system. This gives young people the chance to show their feelings and assist them in planning their care.

Young people rely on staff and advocates to make complaints on their behalf. There have been no complaints raised on behalf of young people since the last inspection. Staff share their views during handovers and any concerns are reported and acted on. Staff observe closely the behaviour of young people that indicates to them what action they should take. This ensures young people are advocated for and their voice is heard.

The home has a large garden and lots of play equipment. There is a swimming pool that young people enjoy in the finer weather. The home has a sensory room and bedrooms have sensory equipment and lights that provide additional sensory stimulation. Activities are provided for young people that are appropriate to their disability and respectful to their age and individual need. This helps them to get the best experience socially, physically and emotionally. The achievements of young

people are acknowledged. One young person was awarded a certificate for walking around the sensory garden at a local park.

The home is well designed and maintained and meets the sensory and physical needs of all young people. There is an extremely comprehensive document that has considered an extensive amount of risk factors within the local area. The Deputy manager has taken a considerable amount of time to liaise with external partners in gathering information that informs them about potential risk, for example, local crime rate and inappropriate activities in the local nature and beauty spots. This information is used to consider any potential risks to young people placed or to those who may be referred in the future.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people are safe and protected by staff who know them well and who they are familiar with. The nurturing approach staff provide helps young people to feel protected and safe. Good risk management and behaviour management plans effectively protect young people from harm. The high levels of staffing provide young people with the supervision and support they need to protect them. Staff are sensitive and respectful to young people who require personal care. They protect young people's dignity and privacy by keeping doors closed while undertaking personal care tasks. Protective clothing is used to prevent cross contamination, and staff make each other aware when personal care is being undertaken. This keeps young people safe.

Staff are skilled and trained in safeguarding and child protection. A staff member said, 'I know the whistle blowing procedure; I would go straight to my manager or call the emergency duty team'. Parents, social workers and other professionals confirm that young people placed are safe and well cared for by staff. There have been no referrals to the Local Children's Safeguarding Board since the last inspection. Staff are aware of who to report to in the event of any concerns regarding the safety of young people. Contact details for the Local Area Designated Officer are provided for staff should they need to refer to them. This means young people are safeguarded. There have been no allegations against staff made since the last inspection.

Young people do not go missing from home. The constant supervision provided by staff protects them and keeps them safe from leaving the building alone. There are profiles on each young person's file that hold information that would help the police to find and return them in the event of a missing from home incident.

Staff manage behaviour well. There are clear behaviour plans that are reviewed and updated regularly. They outline the support needed in regards to the nature of the young person's disability and the behaviour they may present. Staff confirm they spend quality time with young people and observe their behaviour. This helps them

to manage their behaviour well. Staff are trained in behaviour management and physical intervention. Physical intervention is rarely used, and when it is it is to prevent others being injured or harmed.

Staff are safely recruited. There is a robust process that ensures all potential new staff are vetted and cleared before they begin working with young people. All information required to be held in respect of new staff is recorded on their personnel file and is monitored and signed off by the manager. This keeps young people safe from unsuitable adults

The home is well managed in regards to health and safety and fire hazards. Regular monitoring of equipment and routine fire drills protect the home from potential risks of accident or injury. This keeps all who live, work and visit the home safe.

Leadership and management

good

The service benefits from a dedicated long-term manager, who is supported by a stable and committed staff team. They work well together and know their strengths and weaknesses and work towards improvement within the service. The manager has been in post since 2005 and holds a level 4 Registered Manager's Award.

There were no recommendations or requirements made at the last inspection. Improvement has been demonstrated within the service. The Manager said, 'We have spent a lot of time getting to know the young people; this gives us the tools to provide a quality service for them'. The service shows it has a consistent approach and provided a good delivery of care through the Ofsted inspection reports, independent monitoring visits and the review of the quality of care. This confirms the manager is aware of what needs to change and that she takes action to implement change.

There is a development plan that is reviewed and updated to show how the home will continue to operate. The manager and staff team consult with each other, external professionals, and parents to gain the view about the effectiveness of the service. This helps to identify where the focus for improvement should lie. The manager reviews the home's Statement of Purpose and keeps it up-to-date. However, the latest version has not yet been sent to Ofsted.

Complaints or concerns are addressed by the manager and investigated fairly and in a timely manner. There has been one concern raised since the last inspection. The manager said, 'There was one concern raised; it was investigated and the Local Authority completed a visit and were happy with the outcome and had no concerns'.

The manager reviews the quality of care and provides a written evaluation that is sent to Ofsted quarterly in line with regulation. Monthly monitoring of the home is completed by an independent visitor. Reports are sent to the manager and Ofsted.

The visitor consults with staff and young people to gain views about their well-being and safety. As a result, any action need to improve the service is promptly implemented.

The manager uses a training matrix to ensure staff are provided with core training. Staff are supported to attend. Staff have not had raining in supervising contact although they are carrying out this work. This has no direct impact on young people but would be helpful in improving staff's understanding of their role and responsibilities.

The manager operates an open door policy which provides staff with accessible informal supervision. Staff report receiving regular formal supervision but records are not kept consistently to record this. Not all staff have had an appraisal completed, however the manager reports these will all be completed within the next month.

Records are kept securely to protect confidential data. Records contribute to the understanding of the young people's life, plans for the future and experiences. Only authorised personnel have access to them. There have been no notifications since the last inspection.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.