

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	29/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC064027
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Delam Care Limited
Registered provider address	Metropolitan House, 5th Floor, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, EN6 1AG

Responsible individual	Mark O'Donnell
Manager	Nichola Rhead
Inspector	Paul Robinson

Inspection date	29/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC064027

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- The registered person does not always ensure that personalised care is tailored to the individual needs of young people.
- The quality of staff's assessment, understanding and planning in respect of young people's vulnerabilities is variable.
- Staff do not regularly reassess whether the use of restrictive physical intervention methods in the community and during travel continue to be appropriate measures to reflect young people's age and progress.
- The registered person has not acted swiftly to ensure that the new manager has made an application to become the registered manager of the home.
- The manager's monitoring of the quality of care is not sufficiently developed to demonstrate the difference the home is making to improving young people's experience.

The children's home strengths:

- The new manager is motivated, enthusiastic and keen to implement new strategies to support young people's progress.
- The manager and staff are child focused and show genuine care, compassion and warmth towards young people.
- Staff work creatively with partner agencies to help meet the health needs of young people.
- Staff plan well for young people's transitions into the home.
- Staff help young people to continue to access full-time education and to make measurable progress in their learning.

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

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 (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
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to the assessment and management of risk, the registered person must ensure that: (2)(a)(i) 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.	14/02/2017
Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20(2))	14/02/2017
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must: (2)(f) 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.	14/02/2017
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(b)(vii))	14/02/2017
If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of the name of the person so appointed and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27(2)(a)(b))	14/02/2017

Recommendations

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

- The home should work in partnership with relevant people as appropriate to ensure that each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feeling and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of the care planning and daily care. This may include the use of and support to use communication aids, equipment and/or any necessary language support ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6)

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/06/2015	Full	Good
12/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
17/12/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
In order to provide young people with consistency of care, the staff routinely review young people's placement plans. The plan sets out the instructions on how staff should support young people during their morning and evening routines, mealtimes and when offering personal care. As a result, staff are consistent in their approach and provide the young people with child-centred care that helps to promote their dignity and reduces their anxiety levels. However, this level of reassessment is not mirrored in the use of restrictive physical intervention measures when young people are accessing the community. This means that practice around the use of restrictive physical intervention lacks the required reassessment to show that such measures remain necessary and proportionate. Also, care staff do not ensure that care planning measures the progress young people make in their communication, self-care and independence skills. This means that the manager struggles to evaluate the effectiveness of the care that staff provide and cannot easily assess the levels of progress made by young people as a result of staff intervention. Following the appointment of a new manager, young people have experienced a range of rewarding activities including swimming, bowling, and a trampoline park. However, although staff have developed an effective communication system, which enable young people to participate in key decisions, this good practice has not been extended to helping young people to make informed choices about new activities. For example, staff have not incorporated pictures of activities into the weekly house meetings so that young people are able to make an informed decision with the help of a visual prompt. Staff display warmth towards the young people, including offering hugs, affection and praise on a daily basis. This helps to give young people a sense of security and reassurance that people care about them. Staff support means that all the young people continue to access full-time education. A teacher told the inspector, 'All four of the young people are making academic progress. These are small steps, but they are moving in the right direction.' The teacher also said, 'We have really good working relationships with the staff. We are on the telephone all the time and we are looking at completing joint training, so that we have a consistent approach to working with the young people.' This collaborative approach is helping young people to overcome barriers to their learning so that academic success can be achieved. Staff have a good understanding of the individual health needs of young people	

and are effective in ensuring these needs are met. Staff have recognised that when young people need to access primary and specialist health services this can trigger an increase in their anxiety. This can result in a range of challenging behaviours being displayed. Staff are imaginative in overcoming these barriers. For example, they arrange for health professionals to complete any necessary treatment at the home or school to help the young person to feel more relaxed. A school nurse told the inspector, 'The home are very good at getting young people to appointments. We work well together. If we need to be flexible in getting a young person some treatment we try to work more creatively.'

Staff recognise the value of regular contact between families and young people. For example, families are invited to have their tea at the home so that they can spend quality time with the child. Families also receive regular reports from the staff about how their young person has been doing. This means that families continue to feel involved in their child's life.

The manager plans well for new admissions, and meets with social workers and parents in order to gain an understanding of young people's needs. For example, in planning for a new admission, the manager has already established what the young person's favourite colour is, how they like their door open at night and their level of vulnerability. This good planning means the manager has secured a good match and has started to pull together a support plan that covers education, health and vulnerability.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Staff use distraction techniques effectively with young people to respond to situations of conflict. However, when physical restraints become necessary the staff do not always evaluate the effectiveness of the restraint. This means that staff lose the opportunity to identify any potential learning that directly results from the use of the method. Self-harming behaviour has significantly reduced for some young people. However, when a young person's complex needs mean that self-harm is a feature of their daily behaviour, the staff team's risk management strategy does not reflect a clear understanding of when staff need to intervene in order to ensure the safety of the young person. This means that risks associated with self-harm are not always managed effectively to minimise the risk to the young person. Staff ensure that young people who wish to access the internet are kept safe. This includes ensuring that the appropriate safeguard software is installed and that	

young people are appropriately supervised.

Staff use praise and a range of rewards to promote young people's positive behaviour. For example, each young person has a box of treats tailored to their individual interests, such as My Little Pony toys, flashing balls, magic sand and colouring pencils. This approach has proved successful for one young person, who, with the support of staff, has developed a strategy to avoid conflict. As a result, he chooses to go to his room to calm down instead of hitting out at staff or other young people.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The manager has been in post since August 2016. However, she has not made an application to be the registered manager. The manager has completed the level 5 diploma in leadership for health and social care. The majority of staff have completed the level 3 national vocational qualification or equivalent. Four staff are currently working towards this qualification and are expected to have completed this by August 2018, which will be within the required period of two years. When new staff are appointed, the manager ensures that appropriate vetting is undertaken so that only suitable staff get to work with young people. New staff receive an appropriate induction to secure consistency for young people. Since coming into post, the manager has identified areas for improvement in order to deliver care to young people, which is in line with the statement of purpose. The manager has been proactive in starting to address the areas that require improvement. For example, the manager has introduced an activities coordinator, implemented a new monitoring system and introduced a plan to address identified gaps in staff training. Staff are consistently positive about the manager. They describe her recent appointment as being like a fresh start and they are excited about all the changes that they can see taking place. Staff told the inspector that they feel well supported by the manager and, while they are offered supervision and team meetings as expected, they equally appreciate the approachability of the manager and her willingness to take on board their own ideas and views on how to improve practice. Staff work effectively with partner agencies to meet the complex needs of young people. Feedback received by the inspector from a range of professionals indicates that staff communicate well and are receptive to the input from partner agencies.	

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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