

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	06/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC355755
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	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	Neill Robinson
Inspector	Ann-Marie Born

Inspection date	06/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. The home has met all of the requirements raised at the last full inspection. This demonstrates its capacity to improve. Records clearly evidence that as a result of the manager robustly challenging the placing authority the home is now in receipt of all relevant records for the young person, who now also has a named social worker. In addition, the manager has put the lessons learned from this experience into new systems to prevent the accommodation of young people without the requisite documentation. This will contribute towards the appropriate placement of young people, enhancing their opportunities for engagement and success. The home worked very closely with the young person and the local education providers to identify an appropriate college placement. Prior to her admission to the home, the young person had not been attending education for two years. She now successfully attends a local college where she has made friends and become part of the local community as well as making progress with her learning. This will enhance her employment opportunities in her chosen career in the catering industry. A staff member said, 'She's gone to college and maintained an education which she hadn't done before, which I feel is a positive.' The home's adherence to a clear e-safety policy safeguards the young person. She undertook an online e-safety training course and carries her fully charged mobile phone with her at all times. This is part of the young person's agreed independence risk assessment in maintaining contact with the home by accepting regular welfare check telephone calls. It also enables the police to track her if she were to go missing. A specialist police officer said, 'They [the staff team] do everything they possibly can to help her and keep her safe. Communication is the key.' The same young person remains resident at the home as at the last full inspection. Prior to her admission, she had experienced 23 previous placements. This is the longest period of time she has spent in one home. This demonstrates the links she has with staff and the attachments she has built to the local area. A specialist police officer said, 'The staff do everything they can to engage with her.'	

The proactive manager and staff team work closely with partner agencies, including health and education, to ensure that the young person receives all the necessary and appropriate services. She benefits from a warm and comfortable home where she has the space for her pets and all of her belongings. However, since starting her independence programme, she spends little time in the home and with staff, preferring to be with her boyfriend. She does come home to sleep every night. The staff have developed an innovative reward and points system to encourage the young person to spend more time engaging with staff.

The young person is refusing to engage with mental health services, although such engagement may prove beneficial. In order to ensure that the staff are fully equipped to meet her needs and understand why she exhibits some behaviours, the proactive manager has ensured that the staff receive extra training and support from a specialist adolescent psychiatry service. This empowers them to further support the young person, enhancing her emotional well-being.

An appropriate behaviour management plan, combined with a reward and sanction system, encourages the young person to behave in a positive manner. As a result, there have not been any physical interventions. Records evidence that since the young person has been in receipt of her own independence monies there has not been any further need of sanctions. This demonstrates the level of responsibility and independence that the young person is attaining. A staff member said, 'We are preparing her for adulthood for when she does leave care.'

Excellent partnership working between the home, local social services and specialist police officers provides shared information about the young person's whereabouts when she is missing from the home. This, coupled with the staff's proactive approach in going out to actively search for her, and regular telephone welfare checks, means that the home is in regular communication with the young person when she is away. As a result, the young person's risk of being harmed in the community and risk of child sexual exploitation have substantially reduced. A specialist police officer said, 'From our point of view, the staff do what they can to protect [Name]. We have a good rapport with staff.'

However, although staff comprehensively record all missing episodes, the young person has not commented upon or seen these records. This does not afford the young person the full opportunity to develop an understanding as to why adults are so concerned when she is missing.

In addition, the placing authority has not made arrangements for an independent person to speak with the young person following her return from missing episodes. They have been relying on the home to facilitate this through the police or their own independent visitor. This does not fully comply with legislation.

Comprehensive and detailed care planning includes quarterly reports on the young person's progress. There is evidence that the young person has seen and had access to her file, but she has not recorded her wishes and feelings. Not all records

have been consistently completed and dated. It is not clear, therefore, whether the young person fully understands and agrees with what has been written about her.

At the young person's request, she has moved onto a formal independence plan in preparation for adulthood. She is responsible for her budgets, shopping and cooking and planning her own appointments. She has responded well to the trust shown in her and demonstrated that she is able to manage these aspects of her life. The staff team continues to offer her care and a home to come back to, as good parents would.

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home, registered to provide care and accommodation to one young person with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. No young people were present during this inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/04/2016	Full	Good
16/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/12/2015	Full	Good
02/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

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 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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017