

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	29/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC040175
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	The Drive Care Homes Limited
Registered provider address	18 Hatherley Road, Sidcup, Kent DA14 4BG

Responsible individual	Emmanuel Akpan
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Joanna Heller

Inspection date	29/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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	
<p>This home was judged requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.</p>	
<p>The new acting manager has been in post since November 2016, and has submitted an application to Ofsted for registration. He was previously deputy at the home and is, therefore, able to offer stability to the staff and the young people, following a period of uncertainty and change. The staff and the management team have worked together to introduce a number of service improvements since the last inspection. These improvements ensure that all six requirements set at the previous inspection have been met.</p> <p>The young people are positive about their experiences of living at the home and the relationships they have with staff. They said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 'All of the staff are fabulous, they're so lovely.' ■ 'I really like it here.' ■ 'It's nice.' ■ 'It's an excellent home.' ■ 'We do lots of things.' <p>Since the last inspection, there have been no safeguarding concerns or complaints. The manager has, since the last inspection, ensured that staff are more alert to identifying and appropriately responding to any allegations or complaints. Staff have been reminded of their duties and responsibilities through team meetings and safeguarding training refreshers. As a result, the vulnerable young people are better protected and senior managers are able to make a more effective and timely response, should any concerns arise. However, not all staff fully understand and implement the home's 'touch policy'. One member of staff instructed a young person to give the inspector a kiss goodbye. While this is not common practice here, it is inappropriate. It undermines the vulnerable young person's ability to understand socially appropriate behaviour and touch, potentially impacting on their</p>	

future personal safety.

The building is spacious and meets the young people's individual needs. The fire prevention arrangements are generally robust. For example, fire extinguishers are regularly serviced and there are personal emergency evacuation plans in place that provide clear guidance on how to support each young person to evacuate the home in the event of an emergency. However, improvements to the environment, including the changing of a lock and the fitting of a new carpet, impacted on the ability of one fire door to close automatically and left another with a small hole. The provider swiftly addressed both matters during the inspection, in order to ensure that the young people were safe. This demonstrates suitable understanding of the importance of effective fire prevention arrangements and commitment to the young people's safety. However, the manager must be alert to the potential of such changes impacting fire prevention arrangements in the future.

Good placement planning means that no inappropriate placements have been made. As a result, young people benefit from a stable home life in which they are able to grow and develop. They receive individualised care and support which meets their particular needs. Individually, they make good progress in relation to their behaviour, communication, confidence and social presentation, personal care and independence skills. One placing social worker said, 'They have a really good understanding of her and she likes it there. She is experiencing a stable happy and safe environment.' Another said of their young person, 'Made lots of improvements regarding his independent living skills. He came out of his shell, started interacting with others and improving his social skills.'

The young people enjoy the diversity of the staff team, which provides a variety of positive role models. They value the relationships they have and the activities they enjoy with the staff. The staffing levels are high, which ensures that the young people's needs can be met effectively in a timely manner. As a result, there have been no missing-from-home incidents, despite some young people having high levels of risk prior to placement.

No assessment has been undertaken in relation to potential risks posed by young adults with disabilities living in the home. This means that staff may not give full consideration to areas of particular concern. However, the individual needs of these young adults mean that there has been no impact on young people in this regard.

Behaviour strategies are effective and, as a result, there is a calm atmosphere in the home. Physical restraint is rare; only one restraint has occurred in the past six months. Restraint is only used by suitably trained staff to keep the young person or others safe. The quality of recording has improved since the last inspection; this enables the manager to have more effective overviews of any incidents. Partner professionals comment on how settled some of the young people have become because of the ability of the staff to use preventative behaviour management strategies, such as distraction, to effectively de-escalate challenging situations. As a consequence, the young people feel safe and there are no issues with regard to

bullying. One young person said, 'Yes, I feel very safe here.' Positive behaviour is effectively promoted. For example, one young person was very proud of the new games console they had earned as a reward for positive behaviour and working hard in their education. They are planning to earn new disco lights next month!

Effective partnerships with parents, schools, mental health workers and social workers help promote improved outcomes for the young people. The young people are supported and encouraged to live healthy lifestyles and some have improved their health. Staff work closely with specialist health professionals to monitor young people's emotional well-being, and are alert to any indicators of declining mental health. All of the young people have educational arrangements which promote their learning and development. Staff are mindful of promoting young people's awareness of the world around them, and do this through daily activities and opportunities outside the home.

Parents and partner professionals were complimentary about the care and support the young people receive. They used terms such as 'fantastic' and 'excellent' when describing the home. Parents and professionals said:

- 'The staff are very nice and welcoming. He likes everybody there.'
- 'It's a great place for him. He likes it there and the staff are great.'
- 'She has become much calmer and she now listens to staff. She doesn't look hyper any more. Before she went to the home she wasn't eating, but she now eats good meals and is looking much better.'
- 'There are very good staff. They give me lots of confidence and I feel that I don't have any worries about how they care for my child.'
- 'I feel my child is safe. I know her best and I think she's happy. She smiles when she sees them.'
- 'They have been fantastic – really, really good. He was initially anxious and very unsettled and they helped him to settle well.'
- 'Staff are competent and really meet his individual needs.'
- 'Staff are extremely good with him.'

Since the last inspection, the manager has improved the frequency of individual staff supervision meetings, which ensures that staff now receive suitable individual supervision every month. Staff report that the improved arrangements mean they feel well supported.

Monitoring systems are in place and the manager has a clear sense of the strengths and areas for development in the service. While some requirements and

recommendations have been set at this inspection, the shortfalls have not had an impact on the outcomes and experiences of the young people. The improvements in the service demonstrate a shared sense of commitment and teamwork. As a result, the service delivers improved care and support which makes a positive difference for the young people. One young person said 'Yes, I'm happy here. My favourite staff? Well that's a difficult question because they're all really nice.'

Information about this children's home

This private children's home is one of two owned by the provider. The home can accommodate up to eight young people who have physical and/or learning disabilities. There is a garden with wheelchair access to the ground floor of the building.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/09/2016	Full	Requires improvement
10/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/08/2015	Full	Requires improvement
18/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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) meet(s) 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
<p>11: The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationships standard, the registered provider must help children develop, and benefit from, relationships based on:</p> <p>1)(b) an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and (c) positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>(2) In particular ensure:</p> <p>(a) that staff (ii) help each child to develop socially aware behaviour.</p> <p>This is specifically to ensure that staff implement the homes ‘touch policy’ and help children understand the norms of social behaviour.</p>	<p>02/05/2017</p>

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the children’s home is a homely, domestic nurturing and supportive environment that meet the needs of the children. Children’s homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than ‘institutional’ impression. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, ensure that where changes are made to the home the potential impact of fire safety arrangements is considered.

- Ensure staff are alert to the possibility that children may be at risk from relationships, including those with other children in the home, staff, family members, friends and others outside the home. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 43 paragraph 9.13)

In particular, undertake an assessment of the potential safeguarding impact on children of any person over the age of 18 living in the home.

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 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 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 children looked after 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