

1232650

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The children's home is owned and managed by a sole provider. It provides care and accommodation for up to three children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Visit dates: 1 to 2 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 21 January 2020

Previous inspection judgement: declined in effectiveness

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

The staff are always available to speak to the young people about any personal issues that affect them socially and emotionally. Staff have helped the young people to understand the issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes good sharing of information on how to keep safe. As a result, the young people feel well supported.

The young people benefit from good relationships with the staff, who provide consistent routines and boundaries. This provides the young people with a sense of security that helps them to manage their anxieties. It also provides the young people with structure and control over their lives.

The staff have supported the young people to remain in touch with their families during the lockdown. As the rules about lockdown have relaxed, one young person has enjoyed direct family time which has been facilitated by the staff.

Staff have worked closely with education providers to ensure that the young people continue to develop their learning both in school and at the home. The staff team has used their creativity to support the young people to remain motivated. This includes one young person making good progress using the educational resources available to them. Consequently, this has built their confidence and led to them enrolling for further education.

Staff have accessed specialist professional support and advice to help them understand and meet the individual needs of the young people. One young person has been supported by the staff to access specialist help. This has reduced the young person's anxieties and supported their emotional health and well-being.

Young people articulate their views in everyday conversations through the regular 'my chats' with the staff. Open and honest discussions enable the young people to have a better awareness of the issues that have an impact on their lives.

The safety of children

Since the last monitoring visit in July, there have been no incidents of young people going missing from the home. However, one young person's placement has been ended as a result of safeguarding concerns.

The impact assessments to support placement matching are not detailed enough in line with young people's individual risks and behaviours. Ongoing disruptive behaviours have had a negative impact on some young people in placement. The provider has given notice to end another young person's placement.

Newly implemented risk assessments and behaviour plans now detail the known risks associated with the individual young people. These comprehensive plans include strategies and actions that the staff use to support the young people to reduce and manage risk.

Appropriate staffing levels allow the staff to monitor, supervise and support the young people well. Staff turnover during the pandemic has not had a negative impact on the young people as there has been a consistent team of core staff supporting the young people.

The staff team has provided a range of activities to keep the young people occupied during the lockdown. Staff have completed refresher and further online training. This has supported the staff to have a better understanding of their responsibilities to keep young people safe.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager left following the last monitoring visit in July when the compliance notice relating to the quality of young people's risk assessments was met. The new manager is relatively new in post but has established a good oversight of the day-to-day running of the home. She has a good understanding of the development needs for the staff team. She is continuing to embed the changes from the monitoring visit in July.

The home provides a warm and welcoming environment and is furnished and decorated to a good standard. However, the cleanliness of the bathroom and a young person's bedroom needs some attention.

The manager and deputy provide regular supervision to the staff team. This allows staff to reflect on their practice and address any gaps in their knowledge.

The manager has implemented monitoring and quality assurance systems, which support her and the staff team to meet young people's individual needs and improve overall outcomes for young people.

Good communication with professionals has strengthened the working relationships. The manager and deputy are passionate in advocating for young people and ensure that young people receive the right support to meet their individual needs.

Recruitment processes are good. This means that staff are vetted and deemed safe to work with young people.

The requirements and recommendation made at the last monitoring visit have been met.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. 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)

This is with particular reference to the cleanliness of the bath/shower room and a young person's bedroom.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1232650

Registered provider: Friends Together Care Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: 7 Tenter Lane, Warmsworth, Doncaster, Yorkshire DN4 9PP

Responsible individual: Thomas Worthington

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sue Hatton, Social Care Inspector



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