

1241970

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is one of several operated by a private provider. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is registered for single gender occupancy only.

The current manager has been registered since 5 May 2020.

Visit dates: 29 to 30 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 18 December 2018

Previous inspection judgement: Outstanding

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

Staff know children and young people well. They understand their needs and how to support them. Children currently living in the home are progressing well from their starting points.

Support plans in place outline clear strategies to respond to children's emotional and behavioural needs. Plans are devised in line with the home's therapeutic and nurturing ethos. Children's mental health and emotional well-being are areas of focus within the home. Because of this, children feel supported and understood.

The continuity of care for children has not always been good. Significant changes in staffing have meant that children have requested to move. These changes have unsettled some children, which has caused an immediate decline in their progress. Leaders and managers did make attempts to maintain children's placements. However, in line with their feelings and wishes, alternative accommodation was sought. This meant that on one occasion, children moved to an area where they had previously encountered some risks.

Children have contact in line with their relevant plans. The home recognises that this can be difficult for children and further support is provided to reduce this impact. When children are not happy with the arrangements in place for contact, they are helped to access external services so that professionals can advocate on their behalf. This means that children's wishes and feelings are taken seriously and acted upon.

Education is an area which the home supports well. Children have been able to remain at their educational placements during the current pandemic. This has been supported by the home and was at the request of children. The home communicates effectively with schools and colleges, and children complete education that is appropriate to their needs, abilities and wishes. Children generally enjoy attending and are working towards impressive qualifications.

The safety of children

Staff in the home are knowledgeable about potential risks to children. Behaviour support plans are comprehensive and are regularly reviewed. Potential risks are not always considered when admitting children to the home. Some specific areas of concern are not documented. Impact risk assessments also do not take the local area or community into consideration. The home should take into consideration and document all risks posed by the environment when evaluating the suitability of placements.

Incidents do not occur often. Support plans focus on identifying children's emotional needs and triggers prior to incidents. When these have occurred, children have not always been fully supported to understand the risks they may have taken. Robust evaluation of incidents and follow-up work with children are required on all occasions in order to prevent or minimise such incidents in the future.

Children currently living in the home have age-appropriate boundaries which they adhere to and understand. They feel safe and secure within their environment and are closely monitored in line with their plans. The monitoring and boundaries in place are well thought through and completed in consultation with others. Children respond well to these and therefore risks to children's safety are currently low.

Senior leaders have responded quickly to any concerns raised about the practice of those in the home. They have communicated well with safeguarding professionals. Staff in the home also fully understand the organisation's whistle-blowing procedures and know who to contact should a concern arise.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager is relatively new to the home but has the required experience, knowledge and qualifications to support her role. She is knowledgeable about children's needs and has a clear presence in the home. Staff have confidence in their managers and feel they receive excellent levels of support.

Requirements from previous inspections have been met. There are now new systems in place to improve oversight and monitoring within the home, which have been implemented following the change in management.

There have been difficulties faced by the registered manager when taking over the home's leadership. Regardless, external professionals report positively on the new leaders and team and comment on the good progress children in placement have made.

There is an extremely well-qualified team in place, with two practitioners having previous experience of managing children's services. Staff are well trained and have recently undertaken training courses which help them to support children's individual and specific needs.

The home has managed the COVID-19 pandemic well during lockdown and when there have been local restrictions. There are sufficient clear and sensible measures in place to protect children and staff. During this time, leaders and managers have worked hard to make further improvements to the appearance of the home. Relationships with children continue to be an area of focus going forward and these are currently progressing well.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii))	13/11/2020
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(b)(2)(e))	13/11/2020

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1241970

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Registered provider address: 49 Whitegate Drive, Blackpool FY3 9DG

Responsible individual: David Crow

Registered manager: Jacqueline Titterington

Inspectors

Natalie Bennett, Social Care Inspector

Charlie Bamber, Social Care Inspector

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