

1246831

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

The home is registered for up to four children. It provides care for children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a private provider which has four other homes in the area.

The manager has been in post since 12 August 2019 and was registered with Ofsted in December 2019.

**Visit dates:** 7 to 8 September 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 20 January 2020

**Previous inspection judgement:** Sustained 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**

Children have positive relationships with staff. Those who are relatively new to the home, with staff support, are building these relationships. Staff understand the needs of the children they care for and how these needs are to be met. This has been helped by the development of children's care plans, which now provide clear guidance for staff.

Children are supported to keep in touch with their families through visits and phone calls, and during the lockdown period through the additional use of technology. Parents say that they are made to feel welcome when visiting. Staff ensure appropriate measures are taken to follow COVID-19 guidance to keep all concerned safe.

At the time of this visit, three of the children had returned to education. Two are at school and one is at college. They all said that they are glad to be back at school and college. An educational placement is being sought for the fourth child, who is relatively new to the home.

Children's memory books demonstrate their lives at the home prior to, during and post lockdown. These lovely books show a range of activities children have enjoyed, including barbeques, walks and trips to the beach. Staff purchased and donated additional equipment, such as a pool table and a drum kit, to provide more activities for children.

Children reacted to the lockdown period differently. Some, staff said, were not overly affected by it, while others, particularly those working towards independence, found it difficult due to the restrictions. For some children, these difficulties were demonstrated by some changes in their behaviours. Staff appropriately supported them through this period and things are now more settled and more positive for these children.

### **The safety of children**

Staff identify and manage risk appropriately. When they have concerns about a child's safety, these are shared appropriately with the placing authority, and children's risk assessments are updated after events when children have been at risk. Currently, the locality risk assessment requires review as it does not reflect emerging concerns in the local community.

Staff are responding appropriately to children who may go missing. Staff talk with children after such events to unpick the reasons why this happened. The registered manager reviews all missing person reports to ensure staff are following agreed

plans. There was a rise in missing person events for three children in April and May 2020 during the lockdown period and as lockdown restrictions began to be reduced. Two of these children have since left the home, and overall incidents of children going missing have reduced.

The behaviours of some children have been challenging during this period and in some cases have resulted in staff being injured and damage to the home. Generally, these incidents have been managed appropriately, which is, in part, due to staff being consistent in their approaches. The registered manager reviews all incidents. Staff form part of this review. They look at what could have been done differently and how to improve their practice. There has been a reduction in the number of incidents recently.

Staff spoken to understand their role in safeguarding, which helps to keep the children safe.

### **Leaders and managers**

The registered manager has a wealth of residential care experience and has a realistic understanding of the home, including the areas that require further development. Staff feel supported by him and are confident that he understands their role and the day-to-day work they do. The registered manager has ensured that the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection have been met.

Staffing levels are appropriate and the use of agency staff has greatly reduced. This enhances the consistency of care provided. The manager provides staff with good-quality supervision and challenges them when needed, thereby supporting their development.

Following a review by the registered persons, a new independent person was recruited. Overall, monitoring of the home has improved and has contributed to developing staff practice and the care children receive. However, the input from children, their families and social workers into the review of the quality of care is not well evidenced.

Relationships with families and social workers are effective. However, their feedback about the frequency and quality of communications by some staff is mixed. Some praised the staff's communication skills while others stated improvements were needed.

Although improvements have been made, records maintained by staff are not of a consistently good quality. On occasions, staff still use language in the records that is institutionalised in style, emotive and/or vague. In addition, notifications of significant events are not always comprehensively documented or made without delay.

## 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   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>40: Notification of a serious event</p> <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>(a) a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p> <p>(b) an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>(c) there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>(d) a child protection enquiry involving a child —</p> <p>(i) is instigated; or</p> <p>(ii) concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>(e) there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>(Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d,i,ii)(e))</p> <p>In addition, ensure that notifications are swiftly made and contain all the relevant information.</p> | 31/10/2020 |
| <p>45: Review of quality of care</p> <p>(1) The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>(2) In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 31/10/20   |

(b) the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it.

(Regulation 45 (1)(2, b))

In particular, ensure that the review of the quality of care report includes the feedback and consultation with children.

## Recommendations

- Registered persons have a key role in seeking to develop the home's effective working relationships with each child's placing authority and with other relevant persons, which may include services, individuals (including parents), agencies, organisations and establishments that work with children in the local community, e.g. police, schools, health and youth offending teams (regulation 5 – engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met). These working relationships will also be key to success in delivering the care planning standard (regulation 14). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.3)

In particular, ensure that communication from staff to parents and social workers is regular and of a consistently good quality.

- 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)
- When establishing the home, the registered person must ensure that it is suitably located so that children are safeguarded effectively and can access services to meet needs identified in their relevant plans (see regulations 12(2)(c)). Under regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

In particular, ensure leaders and managers review this document to identify any additional or increased risks.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1246831

**Registered provider:** Beaufort Care Group

**Registered provider address:** Unit 2 Hollygrove Business Park, Verwood Road, Ashley, Dorset, BH24 2DB

**Responsible individual:** Neil Foster

**Registered manager:** Gavin Woods

## Inspector

Wendy Anderson, Social Care Inspector

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