1270002

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home is registered to offer care and accommodation for up to two young people who may have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or mild learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2020.

Visit dates: 14 to 15 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 10 April 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Good

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

Young people benefit from living in a warm, homely environment. It is a family-style-home, which the young people are able to personalise with their own belongings. This helps them to feel happy and settled.

A young person said that because of the staff's support she can now confidently use public transport and go out to meet her friends.

Young people receive good-quality individualised care and support, which enables them to make steady and sustained progress across all areas of their development.

Young people successfully engaged with their educational studies throughout the lockdown period. A young person explained how they are now at college and are fulfilling their dream of a career in health and beauty.

Staff work closely with other professionals to ensure that the young people continue to receive the emotional health support that they need during the pandemic. As a result, young people have not experienced any setbacks in their emotional health and well-being.

A young person said that they have been able to maintain contact with their family and friends during the lockdown. They are looking forward to spending time with their family at Christmas.

The safety of children

Safeguarding practice in the home is good. The manager and staff respond quickly and effectively to any emerging concerns in order to help protect the young people from harm.

Young people's risk assessments alert staff to their high-risk behaviours and the best strategy for managing these. These documents are regularly updated so that staff are aware of escalating behaviours.

There has been a significant reduction in one young person's risk-taking behaviours, following their admission to the home.

For another young person, their risks around missing from care, damage to property and aggression towards staff escalated. After extensive discussions with professionals, a decision was made to end their placement.

However, the young person's social worker said that the staff went 'above and beyond' to support the young person. Unfortunately, the young person's behaviour was exacerbated by factors outside of the home which left them at risk of harm.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager is appropriately qualified and experienced. She demonstrates a commitment to improving outcomes for young people and in developing her staff team. The stability of the staff team reflects her success.

Staff are positive about working in the home and feel well supported. They receive regular supervision and say that this is helpful in identifying their strengths as areas for progression.

Monitoring of the home by the independent person is sound, and the registered manager feels that this is helping to bring about positive change.

Records and documentation would benefit from being streamlined as they contain historical information that is no longer needed. Also, young people should be encouraged to read, make comments on and sign records such as consequence records. If they choose not to, this should be recorded by staff to promote transparency.

The manager and staff work well with social workers, placing authorities, police and other professionals to support young people.

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

Recommendations

- Information about a child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. The home's records on each child provide a significant contribution to their life history. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraphs 14.4, 14.5) In particular, the removal of historical or out-of-date information.
- Children should be encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents' supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19) In particular, having their views recorded on records and being encouraged to sign them when required.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1270002

Registered provider: Garway Young People Ltd

Registered provider address: 8 Heyden Close, Halewood, Liverpool, Merseyside, L26 9SD

Responsible individual: Julie Collins

Registered manager: Samantha Hill

Inspector

Chris Scully, Social Care Inspector

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