

1270767

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned home that provides short-, medium- and long-term care for up to five children and young people who have emotional needs and challenging behaviour.

Visit dates: 19 to 20 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 5 February 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

Mental health is prioritised within the home. Children are confident to seek out support from staff if they need help. For example, a child chose a staff member to attend a funeral with them. Staff are supporting this child through the grieving process. Gender processes, such as 'real men don't cry', are appropriately challenged.

Children are motivated to learn, and they attend college. Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, the children have continued to stay focused and have engaged with online learning. Children have friendships both in the home and in the wider community. Children are incentivised to work hard and complete tasks. Unhealthy habits such as smoking are discouraged. The pandemic has created more opportunities for children and staff to spend quality time together.

Staff equip children with necessary independence skills. For example, children have been supported to do wallpapering, budgeting and cooking. Staff demonstrate a proactive attitude to learning within the home. An excellent example of this is that children have been invited to attend staff training, which has led to children receiving certificates in General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and infection control.

The safety of children

Children have clear boundaries and they understand the behavioural expectations within the home. Staff will say 'no' to children when this is necessary. Children are listened to and staff are skilled in de-escalating challenging situations. Staff support children to regulate their emotions and make sense of feelings such as anger or sadness. This approach has resulted in children having fewer physical interventions and missing episodes.

There has been some inconsistency in how staff would respond and record information after a safeguarding concern has been raised by a child. A failure to follow correct procedures could detrimentally impact on the wider safeguarding investigation.

Managers introduced health and safety measures into the home because of COVID-19. Staff explained to children why personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to be worn when children were self-isolating. Children are educated by staff about why they need to take safety precautions when out in the community.

Leaders and managers

Managers have completed disciplinary processes in a timely manner when staff have failed to meet the necessary competency standards. Managers have worked

hard to implement a permanent, committed staff team. Children have longstanding, trusting relationships with staff and are protected from poor practice.

Managers take their time when evaluating the impact that a new child joining the home could have on current dynamics. Children are settled, and managers are careful not to disrupt their progress. This stance has been supported by senior managers.

Managers are welcoming of their practice being scrutinised so that they can improve on the care that they are providing to children. Senior staff have been enrolled on leadership courses to advance their practice and enhance professional curiosity. All staff understand whistleblowing procedures and know the importance of maintaining personal and professional boundaries.

Children's care records are up to date, and staff understand what their roles and responsibilities are when completing daily logs and significant incidents. Induction processes are followed. Supervisions and appraisals are completed on a regular basis.

Managers have considered training staff in therapeutic concepts that focus on the secure base model. This training would enable staff to respond more effectively to the needs of the children in their care.

All previous requirements have been met.

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

Recommendations

- 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)

In particular, staff would benefit from further training in evidence-based recording. This should include how to respond to a child after a disclosure has been made.

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

In particular, managers could go further by training staff in therapeutic concepts such as shame, attachment and emotional regulation. This training would enable staff to respond more effectively to the needs of the children in their care.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1270767

Registered provider: K&g Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Knightsbridge House, Rooley Lane, Bradford BD4 7SQ

Responsible individual: James McCabe

Registered manager: Hannah Lees

Inspector

Andi Lilley-Tams, Social Care Inspector

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