

1277497

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children or young people who may have social or behavioural needs.

There is a manager in post who has been registered with Ofsted since April 2020.

Visit dates: 22 to 23 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 7 October 2019

Previous inspection judgement: requires improvement to be 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 live in a safe and comfortable home. They receive their care from a consistent staff team that knows them well and understands their needs.

Young people describe warm and trusting relationships with staff. Strong relationships between young people and staff are further demonstrated by the large number of previous residents who continue to maintain contact after they leave.

Staff have a good understanding of young people's needs and plan their care to ensure that their needs are met. Young people's care plans demonstrate that their emotional well-being and individual wishes are carefully considered.

Staff support young people to lead healthy lifestyles and carry out direct work with young people in areas such as nutrition and exercise. One young person who regularly smoked cigarettes when she moved to the home has stopped smoking with the assistance of staff.

Staff work closely with young people to enable them to overcome barriers to education. As a result, most young people are making good progress in this area. For example, one young person who had been out of education for a considerable amount of time when she moved to the home, has secured a full-time placement at a local high school.

Staff listen to young people's views and work to meet their wishes where possible. For example, a young person requested to re-establish contact with a friend from her home area. This was arranged, and staff now facilitate regular days out for the young person and her friend.

The safety of children

Young people confirm that they feel safe and are able to speak with staff about their worries and fears. Staff help young people to learn about aspects of personal safety through regular direct work.

Young people are safer due to the care and support they receive. Assessments demonstrate that risks to young people's safety in relation to going missing from home or self-harming, for example, have decreased since their admission.

Risks are clearly identified and carefully assessed. Well-detailed risk management plans provide staff with guidance about how to protect young people from harm. Staff demonstrate good understanding of agreed risk management strategies.

Young people rarely go missing from this home. Individualised guidance is in place for each young person, providing staff with the action they should take should this occur. This guidance is generally well detailed and provides a good level of information. However, one example could have provided more information about whether the young person could be considered absent as opposed to missing.

Staff understand young people's behaviours and why these might occur. The skill of staff to de-escalate challenging situations is demonstrated by the low numbers of incidents that reach crisis point. Since the last inspection, there have been no incidents where staff have been required to physically intervene to safeguard a young person.

The manager has taken action to address a requirement made at the last inspection in relation to recruitment practice. Recruitment practice has now improved, and the manager ensures that he oversees pre-employment checks for all new employees. Care should be taken to ensure that employment histories include full dates so that any gaps in a candidate's employment history can be properly checked.

Leaders and managers

There is a manager in post who has been registered with Ofsted since April 2020. It is evident that the manager has warm and trusting relationships with young people, who were observed regularly seeking to spend time with him.

This is a very settled home where young people are making good progress. Significant improvements have been made to the process of impact risk assessment to help ensure that any young person admitted in the future does not have a negative impact on those already living at the home. This addresses a requirement made at the last inspection.

Staff turnover is low in this home. The manager has taken steps to ensure that the staff team has remained stable throughout the pandemic. This means that young people have continued to benefit from consistency and stability.

Staff speak highly of the manager and confirm that they benefit from a good level of support and guidance. The manager monitors training and supervision effectively to help ensure that staff continue to develop their practice.

The manager demonstrates a positive view of inspection and monitoring. He has taken appropriate action to address requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. He is also quick to respond to actions suggested by the independent visitor, who has continued to report on quality and safety of the home throughout periods of government social distancing restrictions.

The manager demonstrates a good understanding of the strengths of the home and areas that require development. Processes to monitor quality and safety across the service have been reviewed and improved. This helps the manager to ensure that shortfalls can be identified and addressed in an effective manner. It was identified that although the manager had completed a six-month review of quality of care, this was not provided to Ofsted in line with regulation. A requirement is raised in relation to this matter.

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
Review of quality of care 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. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— - the quality of care provided for children; - the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and - any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— - supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and - make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. (Regulation 45(1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(4)(a)(b))	30/10/2020

Recommendations

- The registered person must specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission and how staff should support the child on return to the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)

- 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)
- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. Specifically, ensure that full employment histories including full dates are obtained from candidates. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1277497

Registered provider: Hopscotch Care Limited

Registered provider address: 19 Lancaster Road, Carnforth LA5 9LD

Responsible individual: Richard Witt

Registered manager: Richard Flint

Inspector

Marie Cordingley, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020