

1280623

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

A private company owns the home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who may have social and/or emotional difficulties.

There is a registered manager in post who is suitably qualified.

Visit dates: 21 to 22 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 2 December 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Improved 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

Staff build positive relationships with young people, who are making progress. Young people have been living in the home for several years and are generally settled. Young people would like increased access to the home's internet, so they can play games, use social media and use their laptops. Currently, the internet is switched off as a way of managing the younger children's access to online games; this is having an impact on the older child in placement.

All three young people are back at school or college, following the school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One young person is often reluctant to attend school in the mornings to avoid the more challenging lessons, such as mathematics and English. The home is working closely with the school to address this. The other two young people have good attendance and engagement.

Staff have supported young people to understand the COVID-19 pandemic and the implications for them. Staff supported young people to keep in touch with their family and friends when face-to-face visits could not take place due to restrictions. Young people have now resumed visits with their family and friends. This promotes young people's sense of identity.

The manager and staff understand the needs of the young people in their care. One young person is preparing for independence. She is able to budget, plan and shop for all her meals. Staff need to provide further support to ensure that she is able to cook healthy and nutritious meals.

The safety of children

The three young people currently living at the home are generally settled. Staff understand the risks that young people face, which means that there are very few incidents.

Staff understand the effects of being confined indoors during lockdown on young people's behaviours. Staff have dealt effectively with the few incidents of challenging behaviours that have occurred.

On occasion, young people place themselves at risk and go missing from home. Managers have ensured that young people receive an independent return interview when they return, however these do not always take place within the required timeframes. In addition, on one occasion when a young person went missing overnight, staff did not try to maintain contact with the individual overnight or make adequate attempts to bring about his safe return. Managers failed to address this shortfall in staff practice.

Risk assessments are in place and are up to date. However, one young person had three different risk assessments in place for similar risk behaviours. While this has had no impact, it creates additional documents that staff have to update and follow.

Managers need to put in place a more robust process regarding COVID-19 to reduce the likelihood of transmission. There is a COVID-19 risk assessment in place for the home, however this has not been updated since May 2020. It does not reflect current government guidelines. On arrival to the home, staff did not ask about the inspector's physical health or check her temperature.

Leaders and managers

A core team of regular staff provides consistent care for young people. The registered manager ensures that when there are gaps in rotas, staff work additional shifts or core bank staff work in the home to make sure young people receive continuity of care.

The registered manager ensures that staff receive supervision and that regular team meetings take place where young people's progress and practice issues are discussed. Staff feel supported by the manager and are passionate about their jobs and making a positive difference to young people in their care.

Three members of staff have not attained the level 3 diploma in residential childcare within the required time frame. Staff have continued to complete work on this programme, however there has been additional delay due to COVID-19 restrictions.

There is room for improvement in the manager's monitoring of key paperwork, such as sanctions and reports. For example, the manager is responsible for ensuring that all sanctions are recorded accurately and that their effectiveness is reviewed. In addition, there is need for greater oversight of the description of incidents and the language used in documents to ensure clarity and accuracy.

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—	21/12/2020

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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(vi))	
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual— does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b)(5)(a)(b)(6)(a)(b))	21/12/2020

Recommendations

- Children should be supported to express themselves as individuals and should be given an appropriate degree of freedom and choice in relation to day-to-day arrangements for their care, depending on their individual needs and the setting in which they are cared for. This is in relation to both activities and personal items, including clothing, technology and leisure items. Children's reasonable preferences in relation to day-to-day arrangements should be met with consideration given to safeguarding, particularly in relation to the use of technology. Where a child's preferences are unreasonable or cannot be met for safeguarding reasons, staff should discuss this with the child to help them understand why. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.21)
- Regulation 19 (2) details sanctions that are prohibited in behaviour management. Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38). This is in relation to ensuring that sanctions are accurately documented, that their effectiveness is reviewed and that the sanction is applied to specific children.
- Regulation 40 (4) requires the registered person to notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious (40 (4)(e)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1280623

Registered provider: Wrottesley Care Limited

Registered provider address: Fairgate House, Room S51, 205 Kings Road,
Tyseley, Birmingham, West Midlands B11 2AA

Responsible individual: Neelam Raffique

Registered manager: Warren Lloyd

Inspector

Debbie Holder, Social Care Inspector

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