

2494881

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

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

The registered manager has been in post since July 2020.

Visit dates: 28 to 29 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 1 November 2019

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 identified the following serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit:

- Risk assessments do not contain all known information about children's risks and behaviours to help staff to use appropriate strategies to mitigate risk.
- Staff do not consistently follow children's risk assessments and care plans.
- Staff have not intervened effectively when responding to children's challenging behaviours.
- There are serious shortfalls in the monitoring and oversight of the home.
- Managers have failed to notify Ofsted of significant incidents that have occurred.
- As a result of these concerns, Ofsted suspended the home's registration from 30 September to 23 December inclusive. In addition, compliance notices have been issued under Regulation 12 (protection of children) and Regulation 13 (leadership and management).

The care of children

Since April 2020, changes in the staff team have meant that children have experienced inconsistent care from too many staff. As a result, some staff do not know children well. Not all children's placement plans contained up-to-date and accurate information. As a result, staff lacked the guidance to meet children's needs.

Children's bedrooms do not provide a homely environment. Managers have been slow to replace items that have been damaged. One child damaged his bedroom furniture on 23 August 2020. At the time of the assurance visit, his wardrobe, chest of drawers, bedside table and chair had not been replaced. His bed and broken desk were screwed to the floor in an attempt to prevent further damage. Staff had secured a frame made of wire mesh on the outside of his window. This was said to be to prevent birds entering the room. This measure gave an institutional appearance to the room.

In another child's room there were dirty and clean clothes all over the floor. There were broken items on the floor and it was littered with rubbish. The window restrictors were broken and ineffective.

Children say that they like living in the home and that staff are 'okay'. Children did not raise any complaints or concerns. Two children told the inspector that they do not get on well with the third child.

All children have educational placements. Two children attend school frequently, the other child's attendance is variable.

Staff supported children to keep in touch with family and friends virtually when restrictions were imposed due to COVID-19. Face-to-face visits with key people have since resumed.

The safety of children

Managers have failed to complete risk assessments that consider all information about children. Risks such as self-harm and sexualised behaviour are not always included in these assessments, even when this is a known concern. This means that strategies to manage risks are not available for staff.

When children display challenging behaviours, staff are slow to respond. Staff lack the skills needed to manage these behaviours and have not been able to prevent children from harming each other. For example, a child was punched in the face by another child. This incident was not reported to Ofsted as the regulator. Incidents of bullying are not always recorded and there is a lack of monitoring from management.

A number of serious incidents have not been reported to the regulator. This includes an incident where children barricaded themselves in a bedroom overnight. Staff failed to take appropriate action to safeguard children. Children's safety is of concern because staff do not demonstrate that they have the insight into the seriousness of such behaviours and do not act in a timely way to address safeguarding concerns.

One child used a lighter and aerosol to set his bedroom flooring alight. Staff's response to this was inadequate. This behaviour puts children and staff at significant risk.

Risk assessments direct staff not to use physical intervention to support one child's behaviour. This means that he engages in unsafe behaviours with little challenge from staff. Staff lack the skills and insight into his behaviour and resort to calling the police to manage incidents. This leaves children at risk of harm and there is potential of criminalisation.

There is not always sufficient management oversight of physical intervention paperwork. The registered manager told inspectors that these documents are not always submitted to managers on the electronic system for review. This means that shortfalls in practice are not identified in a timely way, which leaves children and staff vulnerable.

Managers do not ensure that there is effective care planning. Managers do not consider all information about children's known risks and behaviours when assessing how compatible children are with each other or the skills of the staff team. Staff do not have the required training and experience to manage some children who have moved into the home. This has led to children living in the home who are not receiving a level of care that is sufficiently well matched to their individual needs.

Leaders and managers

Inspectors identified serious shortfalls in the leadership and management of the home. As a result, the home's registration was suspended on 30 September 2020 until 22 December 2020 inclusive.

There is a registered manager in post who is supported by a second manager. Managers do not have defined roles. This has impacted on the monitoring and oversight of the home and its records. The registered manager told the inspectors that he monitors the home's paperwork every two to three months. This has not proven sufficient to pick up errors and inaccuracies and to drive forward improvements. For example, shortfalls were identified in the staff rota as managers do not accurately record the names of staff who work in the home.

In addition, managers have not ensured that staff have completed room searches when a requirement to remove items that are potentially risky or dangerous has been indicated. Staff do not record all sanctions that are given to children. Managers do not always review sanctions, or their effectiveness. In addition, some sanctions are punitive and not linked with the child's behaviour. Managers are not recording all incidents of bullying between children in the home. This lack of oversight means that the home does not have an accurate record of the conflict between children. The home has, however, held workshops with the children in relation to bullying.

There are concerns regarding the skills and experience of the staff team. Three members of staff have not obtained level 3 in residential childcare within the required timeframes. Four support workers are new to the home and are within their probationary period. This means that the home is not delivering the care or providing the expertise outlined in their statement of purpose.

The manager's quality of care review fails to acknowledge that the home was subject to compliance notices for half of the review period. In addition, there is little reflection on incidents, and the action plan fails to address requirements or identify areas for improvement in the quality of care. These omissions mean that the review fails to demonstrate accurately the quality of care offered at the home or what action is needed to drive forward improvements.

Seven of the ten requirements raised at the last inspection have not been met. They will be repeated with additional requirements raised.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(vii))	16/11/2020
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— 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;	16/11/2020

manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health; (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(b)(d)) *	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	16/11/2020

(Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))*	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))	16/11/2020
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	16/11/2020
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b))	16/11/2020
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	16/11/2020

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))	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b)(2))	16/11/2020
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37(1)(2)(a)(b)(c)) This is in relation to maintaining an accurate and full record of the names of staff working at the home. (Schedule 4(3))	16/11/2020
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child is instigated; or	16/11/2020

concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	
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. (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(4)(a)(b)(c))	16/11/2020

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2494881

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: Andrew Fisher

Inspectors

Debbie Holder, Social Care Inspector

Ann-Marie Jones, Social Care Inspector

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