

2495371

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This two-bedded residential home cares for children and young people aged eight to 18 years who present with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The registered manager role has been vacant since May 2020.

Visit dates: 7 to 8 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 11 March 2020

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 identified no 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 well-maintained and domestic environment. They are supported to personalise their bedrooms and are involved in the daily running of the home. Their wishes and feelings are valued, and they feel listened to.

Young people benefit from care provided by staff who clearly understand their individual needs. Staff are enthusiastic and look creatively to find new ways to promote positive outcomes for young people. Comments from young people include 'I like this home because it is relaxed [and] homely, and the staff are nice.'

A range of stimulating activities were offered to young people during the period of COVID-19 lockdown. Staff understand that being confined indoors may have a detrimental effect on young people's emotional well-being and behaviours.

Young people found the many changes across the staff team during the early summer weeks difficult. However, the one young person in placement is now benefiting from evolving, but already trusting, relationships with the permanent team.

Staff recognise the importance of education and promote learning opportunities when young people are not attending a full-time education programme. Staff do not give up readily when a young person is refusing to engage with education. They work with involved professionals, set expectations and provide appropriate support and guidance.

Young people's physical, emotional and mental health needs are effectively planned for and promoted. Healthy eating and physical activity are woven into care arrangements. Staff have a good insight into young people's emotional well-being and respond appropriately to physical and mental health needs. A parent said, 'Care is very individual. Plans take into consideration what works for my daughter and what she likes doing.'

The safety of children

Risks are identified and understood by staff. Effective risk-management planning promotes the safety and well-being of young people.

Risks have reduced notably for one young person. This is linked to a change in peer group, more consistency within the team and associated positive relationships with staff.

The team responded appropriately when a young person's missing profile escalated over recent months. Staff attended multi-agency meetings, worked in line with agreed strategies and subsequently supported the placing team and young person with a placement move. The young person's social worker is confident that the team 'did all they could' to keep this young person safe.

Staff receive support, guidance and training in relation to the protection of young people. They understand potential triggers to behaviour and strive to de-escalate situations which may result in harm. Physical intervention is rarely used to manage behaviours and only when necessary. Close management oversight of incidents promotes reflection and learning across the team.

Leaders and managers

There have been several changes across the leadership team since the last inspection. An experienced responsible individual is now in post. This person is also the acting manager, while recruitment for a permanent manager continues. The well-being and protection of young people are always central in leadership decision-making. The acting manager has a positive vision and focused development plans for the service.

The acting manager has audited all aspects of the service since joining the team. Placement plans are reviewed regularly and adjusted as and when necessary. Among other developments, placement planning documents are currently under development to further improve the quality of care arrangements. The team works effectively with external agencies to meet individual needs.

Good progress has been made with the recruitment of a permanent team, and core members have substantial relevant experience. The new team has had a positive impact on young people and care arrangements. Staff are enthusiastic, they embrace training opportunities and are working together to further improve the quality of care children receive.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2495371

Registered provider: Protea Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 317 Horn Lane, London, Middlesex W3 0BU

Responsible individual: Bon Rogers

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Mary Timms, Social Care Inspector

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