

2495504

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care for one child with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The home is owned by a private provider and was registered in October 2018. The registered manager holds the appropriate qualification.

Visit dates: 1 to 2 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 15 January 2020

Previous inspection judgement: sustained 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

Children develop positive and trusting relationships with staff. Children benefit from being able to share their feelings with their carers. One social worker said: '[The child] definitely has good relationships with staff. He is doing very well there. We work well together as a team.'

Staff help children to maintain relationships with people who matter to them. Staff provide children with regular opportunities to see family and friends. Staff communicate well with other agencies to ensure that contact with family and friends is carefully planned and safe.

Children receive appropriate health care support. This includes specialist support and services. A health care worker noted the effectiveness of staff in supporting a child to attend appointments and to engage well with their service. This support has included helping the child to attend online appointments, in line with COVID-19 restrictions.

Children attend and engage in education. For one child, who had previously not regularly attended school, this is significant progress.

The home environment is safe and enables staff to meet Children's needs. However, it is not consistently presented to a high standard, particularly the gardens at the front and rear of the home. The appearance of these areas detracts from the generally nurturing environment.

The safety of children

Staff understand how to manage risk and keep children safe. Over time, children are supported to reduce their risk-taking behaviours.

The positive relationships between staff and children have contributed to a significant reduction in challenging behaviour. Children are safer because the number of incidents has reduced.

Staff are not confident in their understanding of how to monitor children's online safety. Children's age, level of development and past experiences are not yet fully considered when devising online safety plans. Although this has not resulted in any harm to children, it means that online safety plans are not as strong as they could be.

Staff know their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. They understand the home's whistleblowing policy and know what to do if they are concerned that a child might be at risk of abuse or exploitation.

Leaders and managers

An experienced registered manager is in post but is currently absent from work. The deputy manager is currently leading the home. The lack of a registered manager has, on occasion, led to some delay in completion of management tasks.

Senior management scrutiny and auditing are lacking. No formal management monitoring is currently taking place. This means that shortfalls in practice may not be identified, recognised or acted on.

There have been several changes in the staffing of the home. This turnover of staff means that children have not always benefited from a continuity of care. However, there is a core group of experienced staff who provide good-quality care.

Managers have started to address previous shortfalls. Most requirements set at the last inspection are met. However, a requirement relating to the leadership and management of the home is repeated.

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 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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;	06/11/2020

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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (e))	
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— 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(f))	06/11/2020

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. (The Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, page 15, paragraph 3.9.)
- Children must feel safe and be safe. Staff should support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside the home to the extent that any good parent would. Staff should help children to understand how to protect themselves, feel protected and be protected from significant harm. (The Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, page 43, paragraph 9.9.)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2495504

Registered provider: Clouds Children's Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 73 Francis Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham,
Warwickshire B16 8SP

Responsible individual: Balwinder Singh

Registered manager: Emma Bogle

Inspector(s)

Bev Allison, Social Care Inspector

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