

2509473

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned home registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children. According to the statement of purpose, the home is for children who have experienced abuse, neglect or childhood trauma.

Visit dates: 30 September to 1 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 5 August 2020 (monitoring visit)

Previous inspection judgement: Declined in effectiveness (8 January 2020)

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.

Due to Ofsted's concerns about organisational leadership and management arrangements, a monitoring visit was conducted on 5 August 2020. On this visit, various improvements to the care and safety of the children were identified. This followed a judgement of declined effectiveness at the interim inspection on 8 January 2020. This assurance visit has found that the positive trend in improvement, identified at the last monitoring visit, has continued.

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

The children are more settled since the previous monitoring visit and there has been a substantial reduction in disruptive and risk-taking behaviours. The children who were poorly engaged in their learning at the end of the last academic year, have resumed their education with enthusiasm and application. They are making very good progress.

The children say that the home is more settled and that they feel safe, protected and well cared for. They show liking for, and attachment to, the staff. The children's personal spaces have been further improved and personalised, and they are showing increased investment in their home.

The restrictions imposed by COVID-19 have been well managed by the staff. The necessary adjustments have been made to ensure that the children maintain regular and meaningful contact with their families. As restrictive measures have changed, staff have made good use of the opportunities for fun and positive activities outside the home. Staff and the children talk about the fun and enjoyment experienced during the summer.

The safety of children

The staff took immediate and effective steps to protect the children from the threats posed by COVID-19 and have kept these in place. So far, no symptoms or positive tests for the staff or the children have occurred.

The consistent boundaries and clear structure provided by the staff for the children have made them feel more safe and secure. This is reflected in far more settled behaviour and an absence of incidents of going missing from home. It has also not been necessary during this period for staff to use restraint measures to keep the children safe.

Newly developed behaviour support plans provide clarity and insight for staff in how best to manage the children's extreme expression of emotion and behaviours that may be harmful. These also show how well the vulnerabilities and risks associated with each child are understood by the staff. These plans, however, do not clearly show changes in risks and need further development.

Leaders and managers

The main features associated with the identified improvements in the care and progress of the children, are strong and due to clear leadership and increased staffing capacity. Recent appointments have been carefully considered and have

added diversity, experience and energy to the staff team. Working hours for the staff have been reduced, and staff are able to take annual leave without undermining the continuity of care for the children.

The increased staffing capacity has also provided the registered manager with more opportunity to develop the staff team and to improve key elements of the service. This includes developing plans that guide staff more clearly and engage the children more actively in their care and safety.

Standards of administration are good, and effective staff meetings, and up-to-date staff supervision, are further evidence of good managerial grip. There has been an increase in staff cohesion, and team working has improved.

The requirements and recommendations made at the last monitoring visit, concerning the appointment of a responsible individual, regular staff supervision, broadening activities for the children, and making the environment homelier, have all been met.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
Specifically, that plans should clearly indicate the level of risks and if this is reducing or increasing.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2509473

Registered provider: Back on Track Children's Services SE Ltd.

Registered provider address: 185 Dover Road, Walmer, Deal, Kent CT14 7NB

Responsible individual: Christopher Campbell

Registered manager: Katie Smissen

Inspector:

John Pledger, 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