

2510737

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children or young people who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager has been registered with Ofsted since the home opened in May 2019. She is suitably qualified to manage the children's home.

Visit dates: 21 to 22 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 13 November 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be good

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

Young people told the inspector that they feel well cared for by the staff team and that their positive relationships with staff meant that they always had someone to talk to. Parents and social workers said that young people have trusted relationships with staff, which helped young people to make better choices about their lives. Young people engage in a range of activities and enjoy spending quality time with staff.

Young people are supported to have frequent contact with their family and as a result, their relationships with their family have improved since living at the home. During the COVID-19 government restrictions, young people's time with their families has been promoted using technology and social distancing.

Young people are listened to, and their views always considered. This is a strength of the home. Individual key-work sessions address young people's specific needs or any concerns they may have in the home. Young people are actively involved in their care planning. For example, young people have worked well with the staff team to plan their transition from the home to new placements and semi-independence placements.

Young people are in good health. The home liaises with agencies to be able to support and meet young people's health needs. This has included working with professionals who specialise in substance misuse and child and adolescent mental health services to determine any direct work that would be of benefit to young people.

The home has been proactive in ensuring that young people have an identified school or education placement upon admission to the home. The young people engage well in their education and have started to develop aspirations for the future. For one young person, this is positive progress, as they have spent a lot of time out of education prior to coming to the home.

There have been significant improvements to impact risk assessments and the matching of young people admitted to the home. The home has identified suitable combinations of young people to live together, ensuring that staff have the skills and experience to manage any potential risks effectively. Staff are actively involved in this matching process and prior to placing any new young people, managers consider staff feedback.

The local authority care and placement plans for some young people were not on file or not up to date. That said, the home received the documents on file by the end of the visit. It is essential that the home has up-to-date plans on file, to be able to work with placement objectives and track young people's progress.

The safety of children

Social workers and parents said that young people are safe living at the home. Young people told the inspector that they felt safe and this is because the team has implemented consistent boundaries. This has contributed to young people's feeling of security. Young people also talked about having made better choices, as the staff team implements fair and necessary consequences.

The members of the staff team understand risks for individual young people and can identify signs of exploitative risks. Where young people have engaged in high-risk or criminal behaviour in the community, the team has worked consistently with multidisciplinary agencies to try to keep young people safe. Overall, risks have reduced for young people and the team continues to work hard with them to reduce the risks further.

Risk management plans are detailed and have up-to-date chronologies. The plans include young people's views about their risk-taking behaviour. This has enabled young people to identify strategies that help them to manage their behaviour effectively and develop their emotional resilience.

Staff have responded appropriately to safeguard young people who regularly go missing from home and understand missing-from-home procedures. They have taken prompt action and liaised consistently with appropriate professionals to try and help reduce incidents of going missing from home. However, missing-from-home protocols and risk assessments do not include specific details, such as timescales for reporting young people missing to the police, which is in line with good practice.

Since the home opened, there has been no use of restraint in the home. This reflects the positive relationships staff have developed with young people and demonstrates that staff understand how to communicate effectively with the young people and help them to regulate their emotions effectively.

Staff and managers understand abuse and neglect. All allegations of abuse or concerns raised by young people have been reported to the relevant agencies and action taken as a multi-agency team to safeguard young people. Staff have also participated in training specific to young people's risks; for example, child criminal exploitation, gangs and missing-from-home training.

Leaders and managers

During the visit, the registered manager was shielding in relation to COVID-19 government restrictions and the home's deputy manager has been overseeing the home. There is a robust communication system in place, to ensure that the manager is involved in the day-to-day operation of the home, and actively involved in decision-making in relation to young people's care. All the previous inspection requirements and recommendations have been met.

Managers and staff place the well-being of individual young people at the centre of their practice. Feedback from social workers and parents is that the team goes above and beyond to work effectively with young people and partnership agencies. The deputy manager has been described as 'having her finger on the pulse' in relation to understanding the young people, which is also a reflection of the registered manager's approach to managing the home.

Managers promote an open and honest atmosphere in the home, to ensure that young people and staff feel comfortable raising any concerns. As a result of transparent practice in the home, there have been no complaints made by young people. Staff morale is positive and no agency staff have been used since the last inspection to cover any of the sickness during the pandemic.

Staff feel supported by both the registered manager and the deputy manager. Staff receive regular supervisions, which have been used to identify staff skills to meet the needs of the young people. All staff have completed mandatory training, including behaviour management, and most staff are registered for and completing their residential childcare diploma qualification.

The independent person's monthly report lacks evaluation, and on many occasions, feedback is not sought by the independent visitor from family and social workers. Some of the reports do not make recommendations that would help the home improve its service. In addition to this, the independent visitor does not always summarise whether young people are safeguarded effectively and their welfare is promoted.

The overall monitoring of the home by managers has improved. The manager and deputy manager work together to ensure that oversight of the home is consistent. Effective monthly monitoring covers all aspects of the home's care, monitoring trends, patterns and making positive changes to the home's practice where necessary.

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 registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;	03/12/2020

are kept up to date; are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) Specifically, the home should have an up-to date-copy of children's care plans and placement plans on file that have been prepared by the child's placing authority.	
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b)(5))	03/12/2020

Recommendations

- The registered person must specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission and how staff should support the child on return to the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)

Specifically, to ensure that missing-from-home protocols and risk assessments include young people's curfews, when staff should follow young people and timescales for reporting young people missing to the police.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2510737

Registered provider: Pelican Care Group Ltd

Registered provider address: V12 Suite, Merlin Park, Ringtail Road, Burscough, Lancashire L40 8JY

Responsible individual: Thomas Ghannad

Registered manager: Teresa Ghannad

Inspector

Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector

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