

2515380

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to two young people who may have challenging behaviours and/or emotional difficulties. One child is currently living in the home.

**Visit dates:** 10 to 11 December 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 10 March 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 identified the following serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit:

- ineffective management arrangements;

- high levels of staff turnover, preventing the child from forming trusting relationships with staff;
- poor medication administration systems;
- staff have failed to carefully monitor the child; as a result, they were not aware that she had left the house without permission at night;
- lessons are not always learned from incidents;
- staff do not receive regular professional supervision;
- children do not have access to an independent advocate.

### **The care of children**

High staff turnover and changes within the staff team have resulted in a lack of consistency in the care provided for the child. Stable routines and consistent boundaries have not been established. The child does not feel that they are well cared for.

The child has not been supported to access an independent advocate, despite this being necessary.

Daily records do not contain all of the required information. Furthermore, language used within these records is not child centred and does not capture the journey of the child. Records are not written in a manner that will enable the child to reflect positively on the progress that they have made at the home.

Despite weakness in the care arrangements, some progress has been made. A core group of staff have demonstrated resilience and determination. This has enabled the placement to be maintained and has ended a pattern of repeated placement breakdown that the child had previously experienced. This is the longest placement that the child has had. There is evidence that the child is forming trusting relationships with some staff.

The child has been supported to make significant progress in education since being at the home, and is attending school five days a week. This follows a long period of time out of education.

### **The safety of children**

Medication errors were identified during the visit, but the manager had been unaware of these. The child had not been given prescribed medication as a result of these errors. In addition, the child has missed health appointments because staff have failed to take the child to these appointments. This shortfall occurred because of poor communication within the staff team.

Staff have failed to protect the child from the risk of harm, due to poor supervision and a lack of vigilance. In one incident, the child was able to access money from the home's office and use this money to engage in potentially harmful activity.

On more than one occasion, the child has been able to leave the home during the night, without staff being aware. As a result, the child has been able to place themselves at increased risk of harm. Lessons have not been learned from these incidents, increasing the risk of repeat incidents.

The child's risk assessments are not reviewed regularly and do not accurately reflect the current and changing needs of the child. Risk assessments and care plans are not reviewed following serious incidents. This means that lessons are not being learned to prevent a reoccurrence.

Staff have failed to actively reduce the risks posed to the child and keep them safe. Shortfalls identified during this visit indicate that staff do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping the child safe.

### **Leaders and managers**

The registered manager has failed to implement effective monitoring and review systems to ensure that shortfalls are quickly identified and rectified. The registered manager has failed to evaluate the quality of care that is being provided for children. Risks are not well understood by staff and therefore children are not fully protected.

During periods when the registered manager has been absent, interim management arrangements have also failed to identify shortfalls in practice. Actions that are identified in independent visitor's reports are often not addressed in a timely manner, but are instead repeated and rolled over to the next visit. Because of the ineffective monitoring systems, poor practice has been allowed to continue.

The registered provider has failed to ensure that all staff have the required training and skills to work with children who are at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation.

Staff have not had regular professional supervision. When supervision has taken place, the records of this are poor. These records lack detail and do not demonstrate reflective learning. There have been delays in addressing performance management issues with staff through the supervision process. This was a missed opportunity for improvement.

## **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               |
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| <p>The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>develop positive relationships with them;</p> <p>engage with them; and</p> <p>take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare;</p> <p>help each child to express views, wishes and feelings;</p> <p>help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account, and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child;</p> <p>regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care;</p> <p>ensure that each child—</p> <p>is enabled to provide feedback to, and raise issues with, a relevant person about the support and services that the child receives;</p> <p>is given appropriate advocacy support;</p> <p>ensure that an explanation is given to each child as soon as reasonably practicable after the child's arrival about—</p> <p>what advocacy support or services are available to the child, how the child may access that support or those services and any entitlement the child may have to independent advocacy provision; and</p> | <p>22 January 2021</p> |

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| <p>ensure that the views of each relevant person are taken into account, so far as reasonably practicable, before making a decision about the care or welfare of a child.<br/>(Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c)<br/>(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(b)(i)(iii)(d)(iii)(e))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the home providing a consistent and stable staff team. Additionally, the home must ensure that children have access to an independent advocate.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                        |
| <p>*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies;</p> <p>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.<br/>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(b))</p> | <p>22 January 2021</p> |
| <p>*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>22 January 2021</p> |

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| <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h))</p>                                         |                        |
| <p>14: The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) ((2)(f))</p> <p>This specifically relates to effective care planning for the child from the point of placement through to leaving the home. Additionally, to ensure that the child's daily records, including the language used and level of detail within these, are improved.</p> | <p>22 January 2021</p> |
| <p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p> <p>In particular the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>22 January 2021</p> |

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| <p>medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and</p> <p>a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child.<br/>(Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))</p>                                                                                                 |                 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.<br/>(Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))</p> | 22 January 2021 |

\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 2515380

**Registered provider:** Homes 2 Inspire Limited

**Registered provider address:** Shaw Trust House, 19 Elmfield Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 1LT

**Responsible individual:** Angela Muchatuta

**Registered manager:** Richard Adzobu

## Inspector

Zoey Lee, Social Care Inspector

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