

2529639

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to care for up to four young people, aged from 10 to 18 years, who may have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 6 August 2019

Visit dates: 14 to 15 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 6 February 2020

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 identified the following serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit:

- Poor matching of young people. Young people have been placed in the home despite concerns regarding compatibility and risk without additional safeguards in place.
- Risk assessments are not updated in a timely manner to reflect new and emerging risks.
- Staff do not consistently follow young people's risk assessments and care plans, including not taking measures to bring about a young person's safe return to the home when they are missing.
- There are serious shortfalls in the management oversight and monitoring of the home.
- Leaders and managers have failed to notify Ofsted of significant incidents that have arisen.
- As a result of these concerns, Ofsted issued a notice of restriction to prevent further admissions to the home from 16 October 2020 to 7 January 2021. In addition, compliance notices have been raised under regulation 12 (protection of children standard) and regulation 13 (the leadership and management standard).

The care of children

All three young people living in the home are now attending school or college. This is positive and reflects efforts by the registered manager and staff team who have advocated on behalf of young people. However, this has not been consistent since the last inspection. Two young people have not attended school for extended periods of time. One young person who recently left the home only attended school for two days during her time living at the home. Another young person has only recently started college. Consequently, young people are not making measurable progress towards achieving educational attainment and fulfilling their potential.

Staff do not sufficiently prepare young people for the transition to adulthood. One young person lacks routines and staff miss opportunities to develop independence skills such as maintaining the travelling to college by themselves or managing their time gaming.

Staff have been proactive in reducing the risk of COVID-19 to young people. They have implemented additional measures to protect and promote the health of young people. There have been disruptions and alterations to young people's family time; however, they have an understanding about why this is. Young people have been supported to maintain other forms of contact with family using voice or video calls. However, one social worker told the inspector that staff had not been proactive in promoting and facilitating family time for their young person. As the young person is approaching adulthood this does not support this important transition in their life.

The safety of children

Managers' and staff's response to young people going missing from care is poor. Staff do not always follow the strategies put in place to prevent young people from going missing from home. This is despite staff being aware of the significant risks young people face while they are missing, such as child sexual exploitation, grooming, criminal activity and associating with known risky adults. Staff do report young people missing to the police and the placing authority. However, staff do not make attempts to find young people after 11pm and have, on one occasion, failed to pick them up when young people have asked staff to do so. Managers have failed to identify or address these shortfalls in staff practice.

Managers have failed to accurately assess the risk that young people face or devise effective plans to manage these risks. Managers have not ensured that essential paperwork, such as risk assessments, is reviewed and updated quickly following an incident. The matching of new young people coming to live in the home with existing young people is poor. A young person was admitted to the home while there was an ongoing police investigation into a serious sexual assault against another young person. Despite the local authority evaluating this risk and devising a safety plan this was not in action in the home. This has the potential to place young people at risk of harm.

Young people said they are happy living at in this home, however they disagreed with the wi-fi restrictions in place. Young people are only permitted access to the wi-fi in their bedrooms between 6pm and 9pm. This method of control is not individually risk assessed or care planned and does not promote young people's independence.

A number of serious incidents have not been reported to Ofsted, which prevents the regulator from having adequate oversight. For example, one young person who was at risk of child sexual exploitation went missing from home for five days. On another occasion, a young person witnessed a fatal stabbing while associating with risky adults. Managers did not feel that these were serious incidents that required notification.

Leaders and managers

Inspectors found shortfalls in the leadership and management of the home. The manager had not addressed all the shortfalls identified at the last inspection in February 2020. Four of the six requirements raised at the last inspection have not been met. They are repeated with additional requirements raised. The lack of progress against previously identified shortfalls does not demonstrate that practice is improving in this home. The monitoring and oversight of incidents and documentation are insufficient to identify and drive forward improvements. As a

result, a notice to restrict accommodation was issued on 16 October 2020 until 7 January 2021 inclusively.

Managers monitoring systems do not identify errors and review systems do not ensure that there is reflection on young people's behaviour and staff practice to make improvements. For example, there is missing information within incident logs dating back to July 2020. As a result, the quality of care provided does not continually improve.

Leaders and managers do not have effective systems in place to review the care provided to young people. One young person's plans were not reviewed and amended for a year which has prevented progress in their transition from the home.

Leaders and managers have not addressed shortfalls in staff training. Staff have not completed training in key areas such as self-harm and harmful sexual behaviours. This means that staff do not have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the young people they care for.

There have been high numbers of staff who young people are not familiar with working in the home recently due to staff absences. This has impacted on the continuity of care available to young people.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home,	30/11/2020

to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult.	
(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(vi))	
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— 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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare.	30/11/2020
(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)) *	
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	30/11/2020
(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(e)(h)) *	

The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(ii)(c))	30/11/2020
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii)(b)(c))	30/11/2020
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. (2) The registered person must— (a) maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; (b) ensure that the records are kept up to date; and (c) retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1)(2))	30/11/2020

The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(e))	30/11/2020
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2529639

Registered provider: Coventry City Council

Registered provider address: Coventry City Council, Council House, Earl Street, Coventry CV1 5RR

Responsible individual: Angela Whitrick

Registered manager: Safil Khan

Inspectors

Ann-Marie Jones, Social Care Inspector
Debbie Holder, Social Care Inspector

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