

2535887

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home was registered in August 2019. The home can accommodate five children. The home looks after children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home has yet to receive a full inspection from Ofsted. A full inspection was due to take place during the last inspection year but did not occur due to the national lockdown and the subsequent suspension of Ofsted inspections.

The home does not have a registered manager in post. The last registered manager left the home in June this year. A new acting manager was appointed last week.

Visit dates: 29 to 30 October 2020

Previous inspection date: Not previously inspected

Previous inspection judgement: Not previously inspected

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 are provided with care that meets their individual needs. The same three children who first moved into the home after it was registered remain living there. The strong commitment shown to them by leaders, managers and staff has enabled them to settle and make progress. Children say that the best thing about living at the home is the staff.

All children engage in their education and have made progress in both their attendance and attitude to learning. One independent reviewing officer highlighted the considerable progress made by a child who had previously refused to attend any form of education before he was admitted to the home.

Children benefit from living in a home that provides them with a high standard of comfort, accommodation and facilities. The building is in excellent condition, with both the inside and outside of the property appearing well maintained and homely. Older children have the option of moving into the home's annex in order to develop independent living skills.

Staff are mindful of the need to support children's mental health and well-being. Care plans highlight any concerns that might exist. When necessary, staff appropriately challenge placing authorities to ensure that children receive the services they require. For example, one child was able to receive acupuncture to help reduce their levels of anxiety.

The safety of children

All children living in the home report feeling safe. Staff display an appropriate understanding of how to safeguard children. When safeguarding concerns arise, leaders, managers and staff ensure that all appropriate measures are followed, including notifying designated officers from the local authority.

Managers have made the necessary arrangements to keep all who live and work at the home safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Visitors and staff are expected to use the hand sanitiser at the front door as they enter the home. Further measures include taking the temperature of staff and visitors on arrival at the home and practising social distancing to help reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19.

Staff help children to behave appropriately and encourage them to consider the consequences of their actions. The staff rarely impose punitive sanctions on children. Instead, they use a positive reinforcement approach. For example, after children have broken a house rule, they are asked to consider a suitable reparation to make amends.

Children's risk assessments highlight their individual vulnerabilities and link them to risk reduction strategies. This approach has been successful. For example, there are fewer incidents of violent behaviour. One independent reviewing officer noted that, 'The difference between [the child's] behaviour when he moved in and now is positively worlds apart.'

The home experienced some unsettled behaviour by children during the first national lockdown. Since then, children have adapted to different routines, have returned to school and live together in a more amicable way. During this assurance visit, which took place during the school half term, all three children had been taken by staff for a planned day out at a theme park which was holding a Halloween event.

Leaders and managers

The home is experiencing a period of transition. The previous registered manager left the home in June 2020. The subsequent manager then resigned before an application to register them had been submitted to Ofsted. A new manager started a week before this visit took place and is in the process of applying to Ofsted to be registered.

Despite the turnover of managers, external care professionals praise the way in which the home is run. In particular, they praise the focus placed on meeting the specific care and educational needs of children. The responsible individual and director are committed to providing children with a high quality of care and are able to articulate clear plans to support the new manager to achieve this objective.

Staff say that they receive a good level of support from leaders and managers. However, the level of formal supervision has slipped in recent months. The new manager has started to provide staff with more regular formal supervision sessions.

A comprehensive training and development programme is in place. This ensures that staff understand the needs of children in residential care and can build on their existing skills and experiences.

An independent person visits the home each month and completes reports on the quality of care provided. Internal monitoring is also conducted by managers in the home. However, neither of the monitoring reports contain enough feedback from children or external partners.

Managers also have access to a separate property that is used to provide children who live at the home with short breaks or short-term interventions. However, the home's statement of purpose highlights that the other property could be used for a 60-day assessment before children are admitted to the home. If this practice occurs as currently set out, it might result in the operation of an unregistered children's home. The home's statement of purpose does not provide clarity that the provider will not place children in an unregistered setting.

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
Appointment of registered manager The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— There is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)) In particular, the registered provider must ensure that Ofsted receives an application from the manager to be registered as manager of the home.	30/01/2021
Statement of purpose The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in schedule 1. The registered person must— Keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 16 (1)(3)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the statement of purpose is reviewed and amended to clarify the use of the other (outreach) property to ensure that the home complies with regulation and Ofsted guidance.	30/01/2021
Review of quality of care The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("quality of care review") at least once every 6 months.	30/01/2021

In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— The feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(b))		
Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that employees— Receive practice related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1)(4)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff receive formal supervision on a regular basis.	30/01/2021	

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2535887

Registered provider: Kelwel Care Limited

Registered provider address: Jubilee House, The Drive, Great Warley, Brentwood, Essex CM13 3FR

Responsible individual: Anne Wells

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Kevin Whatley, Social Care Inspector

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