

2547560

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to three children who present with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The registered manager role has been vacant since February 2020.

**Visit dates:** 21 to 22 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**

Young people live in a well-maintained and homely environment. They are supported to personalise their bedrooms and they are encouraged to play a key role in the daily running of the home. Their wishes and feelings are valued, and they feel listened to. They receive individualised care, which meets their identified needs.

Young people quickly settle into life at the home and have a real sense of belonging. Staff have successfully formed trusting and mutually respectful relationships with the young people. One young person new to the home said, 'I feel safe living in this home. Staff do not make judgements about me, they listen to me and help me to develop strategies to help me to manage my feelings.'

Young people are attending school and engage in formal and informal online learning. Staff liaise closely with educators and provide appropriate guidance and support.

Staff work well with professionals to manage young people's emotional, physical and mental health needs. Healthy eating and physical activity are woven into care and support arrangements. All staff demonstrate good insight into young people's emotional well-being and respond appropriately. A social worker said, 'This is a learning home. They listen to my young person and take time to educate themselves if knowledge is lacking. This has ensured that my young person feels respected, safe and accepted.'

A range of stimulating activities were offered to young people during the lockdown period. For example, bicycles were purchased, together with a range of stimulating games. Staff understand that being confined to the house and garden can have a detrimental effect on young people's emotional well-being and behaviours.

## **The safety of children**

All young people were happy to speak with the inspector during the visit and said they felt safe living in the home. Staff have successfully created a safe and stable environment for them. Young people feel cared for and spoke of how living in the home had made a positive difference to their mental health.

Staff have kept up to date with relevant safeguarding training and fully understand their role in keeping young people safe. Risks are identified, and effective risk management promotes the safety and well-being of young people.

Young people do not regularly go missing from this home. They have comprehensive individual support plans and risk assessments. One young person, who previously experienced several placement breakdowns due to high levels of missing-from-home incidents, has not been reported missing since moving into the home. When asked about this, she responded, 'The staff really care about me, they listen and take action to ensure I am happy.'

Staff receive support, guidance and training on the protection of young people. They understand potential triggers and quickly de-escalate situations before any challenging behaviours occur. There are clear boundaries in place to support staff to provide safe care. Close management oversight of incidents promotes reflection and learning across the team.

### **Leaders and managers**

The home has had no registered manager since February 2020. The current acting manager has applied for registration with Ofsted. The acting manager has a positive vision and focused development plan for the service. The well-being and protection of young people are central in management decision-making.

The acting manager's relationships with other professionals are effective. All professionals and parents spoken to were highly complimentary about the acting manager and the staff team. This is particularly the case in relation to the manager's communication with schools, local authority staff and parents. A social worker commented, 'It took a number of weeks before my young person would meet with me face to face. It is a compliment to the manager and staff that the young person feels so safe in the home that they were willing to meet and speak with you during the inspection.'

The staff team spoke highly of the manager. Supervision of staff is regular and effective. The expertise in the staff team has a positive impact on young people and care arrangements. The staff are enthusiastic and embrace training, education and new ways of working to understand and improve young people's lives.

## **Children's home details**

**Unique reference number:** 2547560

**Registered provider:** Ownlife Limited

**Registered provider address:** 8 Poole Hill, Bournemouth, Dorset BH2 5PS

**Responsible individual:** David Hastings

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## **Inspector**

Juanita Mayers, Social Care Inspector

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