

2547761

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to accommodate three children with social and emotional difficulties. The home is owned by a small provider, which has two other homes in the county.

The registered manager has been in post since February 2020, when the home was registered. This home has not previously been inspected.

Visit dates: 21 to 22 September 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

Staff and children enjoy strong and trusting relationships that have continued to flourish during the pandemic. This home was registered to provide a permanent home for children who lived in other homes within the organisation. The location of the home was chosen to reduce daily travel to the children's schools and to allow children to be closer to friends from their school community.

Children continue to keep in touch with their families. Staff have been creative in the use of technology to enable families to communicate during times of lockdown and social distancing. The independent visitor sat in the garden during her visits so that she was able to hear what the children think about their home.

Staff and education providers work together, ensuring that all children continue to learn and make progress in their education. Staff have been creative and developed a good routine of daily education. Children enjoy school and are supported with their GCSE coursework.

Staff understand the multiple and sometimes complex needs of children. However, on one occasion, staff did not adequately review and monitor the impact of an incident on children's emotional health and failed to seek professional medical advice when necessary.

Children said that they can talk freely and openly with staff about any health issues. They said staff have helped them to understand the COVID-19 pandemic and how to keep safe and healthy.

Children shared their views with the inspector about their care, the home, the community and national issues. They took part in the VE Day celebrations and made bunting for the street. Children enjoyed days out to theme parks and had picnics by the river, which boosted their self-esteem and lifted their morale.

The safety of children

Staff understand how to manage risk and keep children safe. Children have not been missing from the home and have followed government guidance about keeping safe during the pandemic.

The positive relationships between staff and children, and staff's understanding of risk, have allowed children and staff to have a better understanding of one another, which has resulted in only two incidents in the home.

Staff understand the effect on children's behaviour of being confined indoors during lockdown. Staff have dealt effectively with the few incidents of challenging behaviour that have occurred. However, on one occasion, staff failed to take effective action to safeguard a child following a serious incident of self-harm. No medical advice was sought and the child was not removed to a place of safety. The child's risk assessment was not updated and conversations did not take place with

the child after the event about how they might be feeling. This was not in line with the home's policy and procedure.

Staff continue to access training in a variety of formats, including online. This enables them to understand a child's emotional health and how best to respond to keep children safe and protected. New staff are enrolled onto a level 2 qualification in child mental health before they proceed to the mandatory level 3 qualification. This training programme allows staff a greater insight into their new care role as child practitioner.

Leaders and managers

The manager is in his first role as a registered manager and has previously been a deputy manager with the company. He is ably supported by a strong team of residential staff.

The manager and senior staff ensure that all children's plans are constantly reviewed, considering the COVID-19 outbreak and the easing of restrictions. Staff clearly understand these plans and implement them appropriately.

The independent visitor continues to monitor the progress and well-being of the children. Visits were carried out face to face and involved speaking with children and. This gave children the opportunity to speak with someone independent from the home about their care during lockdown.

Strong relationships with partner agencies and social workers have continued, with regular face-to-face discussions in the garden. Professionals continue to work together to benefit the children.

Staff benefit from strong leadership and support. Training continues in a variety of formats to ensure ongoing and effective staff development. The manager provides regular supervision to all staff.

One requirement has been made following this visit.

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 protection of children standard Staff are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies (Regulation 12 (2)(vii))	31/10/2020

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Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2547761

Registered provider: Cherish Children's Care

Registered provider address: Unit 8a, Skyways Commercial Campus, Amy Johnson Way, Blackpool FY4 3RS

Responsible individual: Wendy Watson

Registered manager: Christopher Baker

Inspector

Elaine Clare, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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