

2549726

Worcestershire Children First

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority previously managed this home. It was re-registered in October 2019, when the local authority became a holding company. The home is registered to provide short breaks for children with learning disabilities.

The manager re-registered with Ofsted in October 2019. She holds a level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 February 2021

This monitoring visit

This is the home's first visit since registration in October 2019. This visit was carried out to enable the regulator to obtain an initial assessment of children's short-break experiences at the home. The inspectors also followed up on comments made by stakeholders in Ofsted's point-in-time survey, for example, in relation to staff consistency and parents being able to access their short breaks.

Due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, Ofsted did not carry out a physical visit to the home. Inspectors gathered evidence in several different ways, including talking to managers, staff, professionals and parents in video calls. In addition, managers were asked to provide electronic documents for the inspectors to review.

The provider has needed to make the decision to temporarily close the short-break provision on three occasions due to the impact of COVID-19. These closures have been for short periods. Some parents felt they had lost out on their short break. However, other parents and carers have made the decision to keep their children at home. Staff have been responsive to parents and carers who have chosen not to use the service, by offering remote support through regular telephone calls.

To manage potential COVID-19 risks to children, the registered manager has reduced the number of nights the service is open. Staff have worked flexibly to ensure that the compatibility, safety and individual needs of children are met. This

has ensured that the assessed needs of children continue to be met, and that parents and carers feel their children are safe.

New children continue to be introduced to the service. Prior to any child receiving care, the registered manager and staff work in close partnership with parents and carers. This ensures that staff acquire the knowledge they need to support new children to settle quickly into the service and stay overnight.

Individualised care is at the heart of the service. Children have a range of abilities and disabilities, which are well understood by the staff. Social workers and parents are very positive about the quality of care. Parents feel that staff understand their child's communication needs and help them to enjoy activities and build friendships. Careful assessment and planning mean that staff understand children's risks and can keep them safe.

One parent told the inspectors that the staff do a fantastic job in making sure that their child's needs are fully met.

All new staff go through a well-established induction. This means that staff only get signed off from their initial probation period after they have demonstrated that they have reached the right level of competence.

Managers ensure that staff supervision takes place regularly. However, not enough has been done by the management team to pick up on concerns that staff do not always work cohesively and consistently as a team. For example, some members of staff feel that there is a lack of consistent leadership across the three shift teams and this creates a division between members of staff. Without this being addressed, there is the potential that this atmosphere can start to impact on children's short-break experiences.

Recent inspection history

Not previously inspected

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 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 work as a team where appropriate. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b))	30 April 2021

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2549726

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Worcestershire Children First

Registered provider address: Worcestershire Children First, County Hall Campus, Spetchley Road, Worcester, Worcestershire WR5 2NP

Responsible individual: Justine Bishop

Registered manager: Deirdre Pryce

Inspectors

Dawn Bennett, Social Care Inspector
Lydia Isaac, Social Care Inspector

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