

2564769

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and run. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children and young people with learning disabilities. Currently, there are two children and one young person who has reached the age of 18 years living at this home.

The home registered on 4 March 2020. The registered manager is suitability experienced in residential care and is currently undertaking a level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

Visit dates: 23 and 24 March 2021

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

This visit was undertaken due to serious and widespread concerns that were identified at another home operated by the same provider. Ofsted wanted to be reassured that the children and young people living at this home are safe and protected from harm, and that they receive care from staff who have the essential skills and experience. We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this visit.

The care of children

The children and young people have very diverse physical and mental health needs and learning difficulties. They live in their own accommodation across three properties that have been modified to interconnect with each other. The accommodation is personalised and adapted to suit each child or young person's needs. This means there is ample space for the children and young people to feel safe and secure in their surroundings.

Children and young people living at this home are well cared for because the registered manager and staff are very knowledgeable about their individual needs and vulnerabilities associated with their learning disabilities. In addition, there is a strong 'team around the child' approach involving social care, medical professionals and parents. As a result, the staff and the registered manager are better informed, and the children and young people receive the best possible care.

The children and young people's characteristics, their level of functioning and ways of communication are well known. The use of letter writing, storyboards and visual aids helps the children and young people to express themselves, learn and understand the world around them.

The safety of children

No concerns were identified in respect of the safety and well-being of the children and young people. The body language and rapport observed with staff and the manager during the visit suggest that the children and young people feel safe in their surroundings.

The children and young people's complex behaviours are well known and understood by the manager and staff. The approach to managing incidents of self-injurious behaviour, behaviour linked to Prader-Willi syndrome and autism spectrum disorder is personalised. Consequently, the strategies used minimise an increased risk of harm to self or others.

The use of physical intervention is balanced and there is no evidence to suggest that measures such as confinement or supine holds have occurred to manage behaviour. De-escalation and diversion techniques are often successful in reducing anxieties because the staff and manager know the children and young people well. For

example, for one child, self-injurious behaviour is often minimised by holding and stroking their hands while talking in a calm voice.

All incident reports have been thoroughly scrutinised and social workers confirm receipt of such reports within 24 hours of the incident occurring. The recording of physical interventions meets regulations. However, records could be more detailed to include a narrative that identifies potential triggers. This would enhance staff practice, particularly for new staff, in managing incidents better before they reach crisis point.

The quality of managerial review and staff de-brief is inconsistent, although they are completed in all instances. However, a more detailed evaluation would benefit future practice and any lessons learned.

The logging and recording of allegations ensure that they are all treated seriously. Close collaboration with the child's social worker and designated officer means that any child protection concerns are investigated proportionately and thoroughly.

Leaders and managers

During the visit, the inspector was reassured that no staff have been redeployed or used to cover shifts from other homes operated under the same provider. Inspectors checked a sample of recruitment files to ensure that safe recruitment practice takes place.

Professional feedback is positive and social workers have raised no concerns about the quality of care the children and young people receive. They report that staff and the registered manager have a good understanding of their complex needs and vulnerabilities. Communication is effective and proactive to ensure that the right support and care is provided.

Any issues relating to staff conduct have been investigated. Where concerns have been upheld, those members of staff have been dismissed. The registered manager's hands-on approach and service monitoring processes continue to ensure that children and young people receive a good standard of care.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint must be kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2564769

Registered provider: The Hesley Group Limited

Registered provider address: Central Services Hesley Hall, Tickhill, Doncaster,
South Yorkshire DN11 9HH

Responsible individual: Susan McLean

Registered manager: Rebecca Rowe

Inspector

Cath Sikakana, Social Care Inspector

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