

2589621

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a limited company and is registered to provide care and support for up to three young people who are no longer able to live at home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2017. The home registered with a new provider in 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 are thriving in this warm, welcoming and nurturing environment. They enjoy caring and trusting relationships with the long-standing staff team. Young people say that they are happy and that the lockdown period has been fun.

Staff provide an extensive range of enjoyable activities for young people to take part in. These are devised to meet the diverse interests of the young people. One young person, who loves planes, was taken on a flight to Ireland. Other young people said that they enjoyed the art and craft activities.

Social workers said that despite the restrictions, their young people have continued to make progress. Staff skilfully support the young people to keep in touch with their families. They purchased a phone for one young person, so they could video call their family.

A parent said that they cannot say a bad word about the home, when they need help to support their child, the staff are always there for them. Because of this support, the parent said that they can enjoy quality time with their child.

Young people's emotional health and well-being have remained stable. This is because they have continued to access the support that they need. Staff are skilled in identifying when young people may be struggling and take effective action to support them.

Transitions in and out of the home are carefully managed. The manager and staff worked tirelessly to secure the right support for a young person who was moving into their own home. One young person who recently moved into the home said that they felt well supported and was enjoying choosing the items and décor for their bedroom.

Young people have continued with their education and staff have used creative measures to help them to complete this. For example, they have used backing activities to help with young people's literacy skills.

Young people can talk to staff about their worries about the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff provide children with reassurance. They help young people understand the restrictions placed on their lives and how to keep safe and healthy. Staff help young people understand the world around them and develop empathy for others.

The safety of children

Staff know how to identify and manage risks to protect young people from significant harm. Young people are supported to manage their own safety inside and outside the home. Staff are helping young people to become safer from the risks of using technology and the use of inappropriate language.

Staff deal with incidents of challenging behaviour safely. They understand that young people may communicate their feelings through their behaviour. Staff think about what is happening in the young person's life at the time and what they can do to help them. Because staff are intuitive to the young people's mood, they respond quickly and sensitively to support the young people. As a result, there is a significant decrease in the use of physical interventions.

Young people say that they are confident to talk to the staff about anything. This is because they know that the staff will listen to them and help them to resolve any issues.

Young people live in a family style home. The registered manager is aware that some areas of the home need refurbishment, such as the kitchen. This is happening. Staff are delighted that one young person has agreed to decorate their bedroom. This is a big step for the young person and is a result of numerous discussions with them about their choice of colours.

Leaders and managers

The home is led by a passionate and caring registered manager. The manager has dealt with the restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic appropriately.

The manager and staff are resilient. They place the well-being of young people at the centre of their practice, regardless of the challenges that they may present. The manager and staff work together successfully to find ways to help young people make measurable progress.

The manager is aware that some staff training has not taken place due to the pandemic. She is working to ensure that staff have the necessary training to update their skills and knowledge. Also, some staff appraisals have not taken place; these are planned for the next few months.

The manager uses monitoring and review systems to have a detailed understanding of the effect that the quality of care provided in the home is having on young people's progress and experiences. The manager has used this understanding to inform practice and find new and better ways to support young people, for example by introducing memory books.

Young people's plans have continued to be followed and reviewed regularly. However, records are not always recorded to the same good standard. The manager and staff have strong relationships with partner agencies. They work together effectively to identify and meet young people's needs consistently.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction and any core training, such as safeguarding, health and safety, and mandatory qualifications. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, and paragraph 10.8)

In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff training is current and that steps are in place to address any shortfalls.

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child should always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, and paragraph 14.4)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2589621

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Registered provider address: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited,
Venture House, Unit 12, Prospect Business Park, Longford Road, Cannock,
Staffordshire WS11 0LG

Responsible individual: Paul Smith

Registered manager: Victoria Moran

Inspector

Chris Scully, Social Care Inspector

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