

2594875

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to four young people who have a diagnosed learning disability.

The registered manager left in August 2020. A new manager started in post in October 2020 and is not yet registered.

Visit dates: 14 to 15 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

Two young people live at the home. Both spoke of their fondness for the staff. One young person was particularly positive about the quality of the support that he has had, declaring the home to be the best that he has lived at.

The staff talked with enthusiasm about the young people. They are proud of the young people's achievements.

Young people's immediate physical health needs are well managed at the home. The staff worked positively with one young person to enable them to have a COVID-19 test and to self-isolate without issue.

Despite the challenge that COVID-19 has presented, the young people have been supported to access various recreational activities. This has included lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth groups, roller skate parks and trampolining. Young people continue to communicate with their families by phone and in person. An independent reviewing officer commended the efforts of staff to enable this.

One young person is 18 and not in education. The other young person is due to start in a school placement after October half term. The home has worked with both young people to encourage them to participate in educational activities since moving to the home.

The safety of children

There have been substantial managerial changes at the home since it opened in July 2020. The previous manager has resigned, as has the previous responsible individual. Most of the issues identified at this assurance visit predate the new management team's arrival. The new responsible individual has begun to address some of these shortfalls.

Physical interventions are rare. The staff manage incidents through de-escalation and the positive relationships that they have with the young people.

Young people feel safe in the care of the staff. One young person spoke of the ways in which the staff have helped him to feel less anxious and how they use breathing exercises to help him if he is thinking about running away. The relationships that young people have with staff mean that they are comfortable sharing concerns and confiding in staff.

Previous managers did not always ensure that safeguarding concerns were referred to the appropriate agencies. Although recent management oversight and actions have improved, the failure to have referred information to the designated officer and Ofsted means that these safeguards have not been consistently applied.

In one instance when a safeguarding concern arose, no clear, comprehensive record of the investigation was made. This does not provide assurance that a thorough investigation took place.

Management oversight of risk assessments needs to improve. One risk assessment was not updated following a safeguarding issue. Other risk assessments needed amending during the assurance visit to ensure consistency and accuracy. The failure to update risk assessments and ensure that they are clear and do not contradict one another means that the staff do not have the written guidance that they need to manage and mitigate risks.

Leaders and managers

The new responsible individual has begun to oversee improvements at the home. The staff said that they are well led and well supported.

Feedback from professionals is positive. Young people are reported to get on well with the staff, who have got to know them well in a short time. One young person's advocate spoke of being impressed with the understanding of and commitment to advocacy.

The staff team has appropriate access to training opportunities. Staff have been trained in physical intervention, safeguarding, first aid and medication administration.

Previous managers undertook impact risk assessments prior to young people moving into the home. However, these risk assessments lacked depth. For example, one young person's assessment failed to consider his ethnicity, culture and need for mental health services and did not explore the effect of the lack of an education placement.

Previous managers did not ensure that recruitment procedures were thorough enough. In one instance, when information from a recruitment agency indicated that a worker had information on their Disclosure and Barring Service check, previous managers did not explore this further. This means that they did not have a clear picture about the backgrounds and safety of the staff they were using. The new responsible individual has acted to address this.

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 is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii))	31/10/2020
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b)) In particular, ensure that impact risk assessments consider the impact of the availability of education and mental health services and how any prospective child’s cultural needs will be met.	31/10/2020
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. The registered person may only—	31/10/2020

employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(a)(b)(c)(d))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	31/10/2020

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2594875

Registered provider: The Beeches UK Limited

Registered provider address: SBCH House, 212 Ballards Lane, London N3 2LX

Responsible individual: Rebecca Ouellani

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Ashley Hinson, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020