

SC010699

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

A private provider operates this home. The home provides care and accommodation for up to five children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The provider paused the service at the beginning of the full lockdown, in March 2020. Since May 2020, the home has been providing a sole placement to a child with highly complex needs and who is subject to a deprivation of liberty order.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2018.

Visit dates: 6 to 7 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 30 October 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be good

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

The child says that she feels happy and safe at the home. Staff build positive relationships with children and provide them with a nurturing environment.

The child has continued to enjoy weekly overnight stays with her family throughout the lockdown period. A family member spoke to the inspector about the good partnership that she has with the home. She said that the staff advise her, and she advises them, on how to best care for the child.

Staff work in close collaboration with other professionals to meet the complex needs of children looked after. Staff communicate well within the network of professionals and take an active part in the multi-disciplinary meetings. In particular, they have been working closely with the local mental health services to meet the child's emotional needs.

Staff make a strong contribution to children's learning. The educational professionals said that the staff have assisted them in making the child's learning plans. These are flexibly tailored around the child's needs. The child enjoys creative learning opportunities at the home through play and daily life activities, while preparing for the transition to formal education.

Staff help children to develop social skills and ethical attitudes, including respecting those who are different to them. The child has had positive experiences while engaging in activities out in the community. This has included going with staff to the seaside for a short break.

The child's file is organised well. The information is highly personalised and shows clearly what the child's views and feelings are. A key-working system includes sessions on a number of topics and supports the child's progress well.

The safety of children

The home's admission procedure includes a detailed assessment of risks and shows a proactive approach to safeguarding children. The home uses risk management and behaviour management plans that are developed jointly with professionals, family members, and as much as possible, the children themselves. These documents provide clear guidance to staff on how to keep children safe. However, in practice, and, with the high use of agency staff, there is a level of variability.

The records of physical interventions do not always demonstrate that the staff intervene at the right time and for the right reason. The level of recorded detail does not always allow for clarity and a meaningful analysis of what has happened. Not all

agency staff who work in the home, and have used physical intervention, have been trained in its use.

On some occasions, the staff have not used the deprivation of liberty order effectively to minimise the risk to the child of going missing from the home. This does not protect the child from potential harm. The registered manager said that the staff learned from this and there have been no episodes of going missing from care since 14 August 2020.

The home has an effective procedure for dealing with allegations against staff members. Staff are familiar with the reporting protocol and make sure that any concerns are shared with the relevant professionals without delay. At present, the placing authority is providing increased scrutiny and support to the placement, while an investigation is in progress.

The registered manager did not obtain all the required information regarding the suitability of agency staff for their role, before they started working at the home. The home uses three different agencies and they provided varying levels of information. The registered manager started collating any missing information, including references, during the assurance visit.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager said that the ongoing pandemic has had a negative impact on the ability to appoint permanent staff. She said that in order to maintain the required staffing levels, the use of agency staff has frequently been necessary.

The high use of agency staff has created a vulnerability in the service and the consistency of staff practices in the home. To minimise the negative impact, the leaders and managers give regular shifts to the same agency staff. The registered manager also works at weekends and evenings to provide direct oversight of practices during those times.

Permanent staff receive regular supervision and they report that they feel very well supported. However, the arrangements for the management and support of the agency staff are less effective. An agency staff member who has been working in the home since July 2020 has not had any supervision.

The registered manager usually sends notifications of serious events to Ofsted in a timely manner. However, the registered manager did not notify Ofsted when the home made a child protection referral to the placing authority, after a period when the child had been missing from care. This has a negative effect on Ofsted's monitoring function.

All professionals talked positively about the commitment of the leaders and managers. They work well in collaboration with other professionals to meet the child's exceptionally complex needs. However, some professionals who contributed

their views to this assurance visit identified the home's high reliance on agency staff as a concern.

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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)) Specifically, this requirement relates to the high use of agency staff at this children's home and how the agency staff are supported and managed.	01/01/2021
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— injury to any person (including the child);	01/01/2021

serious damage to the property of any person (including the child); or a child who is accommodated in a secure children's home from absconding from the home. Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. These Regulations do not prevent a child from being deprived of liberty where that deprivation is authorised in accordance with a court order. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(3)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure consistent and effective use of the deprivation of liberty order to stop the child from going missing from care and from placing themselves at risk.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— 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))	01/01/2021

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that all required information is available for all agency staff who work at the home.	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—	01/01/2021

has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b)(2)(3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that all above records are kept and are detailed and clear enough to demonstrate that the use of a restraint was appropriate and protected the child and/or staff.	
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; 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)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	01/01/2021

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC010699

Registered provider: Turning Point Care Limited

Responsible individual: Dawnette Legister

Registered manager: Simonette Sehindemi

Inspector

Seka Graovac, Social Care Inspector

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