

SC025420

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

A private company owns the home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager was registered with Ofsted in June 2019.

Visit dates: 15 to 16 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 27 January 2020

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 identified no serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Young people and staff have friendly and positive relationships. Staff understand young people's assessed needs and provide them with personalised care. Young people benefit from suitable daily routines, structure and consistent boundaries.

Young people continue to keep in touch with their families. Staff have helped young people to use technology to talk to their families during times of lockdown and social distancing. With the easing of these restrictions, staff have supported young people to spend time with their families, where this has been possible.

Staff promote and support young people's learning. Young people's participation in education has improved. This has continued during the lockdown. Staff and education providers work together effectively to provide young people with individualised support that meets their learning needs and interests.

Staff monitor young people's emotional well-being carefully and seek professional advice when necessary. Over time, young people's confidence, self-esteem and pride in their appearance have improved. The manager has challenged health professionals and made sure that young people have received the support and treatment they needed at the right time.

Young people are making significant progress in developing healthy lifestyles and reducing risks to their health. They enjoy healthy and nutritious diets. Young people take part in a structured and personalised programme of physical activities, including yoga. They are becoming fitter and using breathing and relaxation techniques to help them manage their feelings.

Staff understand and monitor young people's health needs and conditions. They make sure that young people receive safe and effective support, treatment and medication.

The safety of children

Staff understand their role and responsibilities in protecting young people from significant harm. They identify, understand and manage risks to young people's safety. Staff have helped young people to become safer from the risks of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Staff are vigilant and take appropriate action when they have concerns about the welfare of young people.

Young people trust staff and talk to them about their worries and concerns. Managers and staff listen and respond appropriately. Young people's concerns about how they are treated by staff are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Managers use the learning from investigations to address poor practice.

Staff understand that young people may communicate their previous experiences of trauma, abuse and neglect, and their feelings, through their behaviour. Staff are compassionate. They are prepared and able to listen to young people talk about

their past experiences. However, staff would benefit from training to develop their skills to help young people to understand and manage their feelings and any experience of abuse and neglect.

Staff usually deal with incidents of challenging behaviour effectively. They support young people to find healthy ways to manage their feelings. On occasions, staff have had to restrain young people to keep them and other people safe. Staff are well trained and supported in the appropriate use of restraint.

Staff keep accurate records of all serious incidents, including restraints. Young people always have the opportunity for talking and thinking about what happened and what would help them in the future.

The management reviews of serious incidents do not identify what is working well, any weaknesses in practice and what needs to happen to make sure young people receive the best possible support.

Leaders and managers

The manager is very experienced and suitably qualified. The manager, deputy manager and the senior member staff are an efficient and effective management team. They have shown the capacity for improvement. They have met the requirements made at the last inspection and embedded new ways of working which are benefiting young people.

The manager has dealt with the restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic appropriately. The manager has helped young people understand the situation and how to keep safe and healthy. The manager and staff have placed the well-being of young people at the centre of their practice and decision-making.

Young people's plans have continued to be followed and reviewed regularly. The manager and staff have strong relationships with partner agencies and young people's families. They work together effectively to identify and meet young people's needs.

A skilled and experienced staff team has provided continuity of care for young people during the COVID-19 outbreak. There are enough suitable staff available to respond flexibly to unexpected changes. The manager has made sure that any changes to the team have been discussed with young people and provide them with stability.

The manager and staff receive strong and personalised support, advice and guidance. Staff have been able to continue to develop their skills and knowledge through relevant training. They receive regular practice-related supervision, which enables them to reflect on their practice and identify learning needs.

However, the review of the quality of care report does not provide an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of the home's model of care and its impact on young

people's lives. Furthermore, the report does not show what young people say about living in the home and how their views are used to inform continued improvement in the support they receive.

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

Recommendations

- Children will have varied pre-care experiences. A large proportion of children come into care for reasons relating to trauma, neglect and abuse. The registered person should ensure that staff are prepared and able to listen to children who want to talk about their past experiences. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards' page 15-16, paragraph 3.11) In particular, staff should have the training, skills and confidence to help each child to understand and manage any experience of abuse and neglect.
- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards' page 22, paragraph 4.11) In particular, the outcome of this consultation should be evidenced in the review of the quality of care report.
- 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)
- The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards' page 64-65, paragraph 15.2) In particular, the review of the quality of care should provide an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of the home's model of care and its impact on children's lives.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC025420

Registered provider: Quality Protects Children Ltd

Registered provider address: Hill House, Archway Road, Huyton, Liverpool L36 9XB

Responsible individual: Anthony Nolan

Registered manager: Mellissa Gittens

Inspector

Nick Veysey, Social Care Inspector

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