

SC030439

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide a permanent home and short-break care for up to five children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities.

The home is owned and managed by a local authority.

The manager has been registered since April 2020.

During the lockdown period, the home ceased to offer short breaks from 24 March 2020 and commenced offering limited short breaks from 7 September 2020. Children who live in the home, continued to do so.

Visit dates: 20 to 21 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 25 November 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Sustained effectiveness

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

Children are well cared for and are happy living here. This is echoed by parents and social workers. They spoke well of the care and support that the children receive. A parent said that they can identify the progress that their child is making and that the staff have been instrumental in this. Staff have a good understanding of the children's needs, and the inspector observed staff engaging with children in a warm, nurturing and supportive manner.

During the lockdown period, staff ensured that children were helped to spend time with their family members. This included video calls and face-to-face meetings. Parents continue to regularly visit their children.

Staff ensure that the children's health needs are clearly identified and met. They work in partnership with parents and healthcare professionals to implement positive changes in children's lives.

Children said that they like the activities. Staff have ensured that they have captured the wide range of activities in the form of photographs. The photographs are kept in the children's memory books. In addition, children's art work adorns their bedrooms and the home environment.

The safety of children

Children are safe. Leaders and managers respond to safeguarding concerns effectively. They work in partnership with safeguarding agencies to protect children. Children said that the staff make them feel safe. This was echoed by the children's parents, who said that they do not have any concerns in relation to their child's safety and well-being. Children said that if they had any worries or concerns they would speak to the staff. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding processes.

Staff ensure that they record marks, bruises and injuries. These reports are sent to the child's social worker. However, the registered manager is not recording that he has monitored and scrutinised all these events effectively to ensure that good practice is always consistently applied. In addition, he is not recording how he has come to the decision that there are no safeguarding concerns in relation to unexplained bruises or marks.

Staff are provided with detailed support plans and risk assessments that guide them in how to assist children to manage their feelings and emotions effectively. Staff said that they find these helpful. These plans and assessments are regularly reviewed and updated.

Restraint is used as a last resort to keep children safe. The vast majority of restraints are low-level interventions. However, the registered manager has not ensured that discussions are held with children and staff following each intervention. This does not demonstrate that children's views of the incident have been taken into account and whether staff have learned lessons in order to improve their practice.

Leaders and managers ensure that an effective selection and recruitment process safeguards children.

Leaders and managers

The home is well managed, and staff place the children at the centre of their practice. Staff spoke well of the support and guidance that they receive from the registered manager. They said that he is approachable and that they feel listened to.

Leaders and managers have taken effective action and provided children, staff, parents and professionals with good information in relation to COVID-19. The guidance is clear and informative.

The registered manager has reviewed, revised and implemented a range of monitoring systems to improve the home's quality assurance. This includes restraint records, the monitoring of accidents and a range of health and safety checks. However, these newly revised documents need to be embedded in practice.

The registered manager responds effectively to recommendations made by the independent visitor. Staff regularly seek the views of the children. However, the most recent review of the quality of care does not include children's views.

Children's care and support plans are comprehensive and well written and clearly identify how the children's needs are met. These are regularly reviewed to remain up to date.

Leaders and managers respond effectively to complaints. In addition, they address poor staff performance effectively.

Social workers and parents are unanimous that the care and support their child is receiving are good. They said that there is good communication with the staff.

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
13: The leadership and management standard The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b)(2)(h)) In particular, ensure that there is close monitoring, scrutiny and evaluation of records relating to body maps, and that the evaluation clearly records how the decision that there are no safeguarding concerns is made.	06/11/2020
35: Behaviour management policies and records 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 time of the measure and its duration; 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')—	06/11/2020

has spoken to the user about the measure;

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 (3)(a)(iii)(iv)(b)(i)(c))

In particular, ensure that discussions are held with children and staff following an incident or the use of restraint, and that they are recorded.

Recommendations

- The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of 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, paragraph 15.2). In particular, ensure that the children's views are included in the regulation 45 report.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC030439

Registered provider: Somerset County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4DY

Responsible individual: Teresa Delaney

Registered manager: Steven Kennedy

Inspector

David Kidner, Social Care Inspector

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