

SC034953

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to five children or young people aged 12 to 18 years. Care is provided for children and young people who need a stable placement until they can achieve independence or until their 18th birthday. The home also accommodates children and young people who are in the process of being reunited with their families or carers.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in December 2019 and is working towards her level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

Visit dates: 9 to 10 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 9 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

Children and young people receive good-quality care from staff. The registered manager and the staff team are committed to improving outcomes for all children and young people who live in the home. As a result, children and young people are happy, settled and doing well.

Relationships between the children and young people are positive. Conflicts are resolved quickly with support from staff. This results in a happy and relaxed environment for children and young people.

Children and young people have been able to keep in touch with family and friends, despite local restrictions. As a result, some children and young people have benefitted from improved relationships with those who are important to them.

Education is highly valued and promoted by staff. Staff help children and young people to make good use of incentives and rewards to encourage participation. This focus on education enhances children and young people's opportunities.

Children and young people have access to a wide range of social and recreational activities, both in the home and the local community. During lockdown, the children and young people helped to deliver food parcels to the community. They also enjoyed lots of activities and a recent holiday. This provided children and young people with opportunities to try new things and to make positive links with the local community.

Children and young people benefit from good health and well-being. However, not all young people receive direct work around sexual health. As a result, some young people do not fully understand how to keep themselves safe or the legalities around sexual relationships.

Good partnership working with the in-house therapy team ensures that children and young people's emotional health needs are understood and responded to by staff.

The safety of children

Where children and young people have complex behaviours, these are clearly understood by staff. Staff are skilled at identifying the triggers to negative behaviours and respond appropriately. Because of this, children and young people are settled and feel secure in the knowledge that staff understand them.

Children and young people's risk assessments do not include all their known risks. This means that staff do not have enough information on how to manage and reduce all of the risks to children and young people's safety and welfare.

Children and young people who go missing are safeguarded effectively, in line with agreed protocols. Records demonstrate that when children and young people have left the home without permission, staff respond quickly and make efforts to locate them and ensure their safe return.

Staff know the children and young people well and recognise the impact of adverse early life experiences on their behaviour. They work hard to provide a secure and reliable base from which children and young people can make progress in addressing what is difficult for them.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager is committed to supporting children and young people to gain positive outcomes in all aspects of their development. She knows the children and young people well and shares positive relationships with them.

The registered manager has a clear escalation policy to challenge poor practice. However, this has not consistently been used to good effect. For example, on at least one occasion, the manager failed to challenge the police regarding incorrect criminal offences on a young person's record, and these records have remained. This has the potential to impact the young person's future opportunities.

The registered manager's recording and sharing of information are poor. The manager relies on the sharing of information verbally or through emails. As a result, the staff team does not always have clear strategies to support and safeguard the children and young people.

The monitoring systems to review the effectiveness of the home's record-keeping are not robust. For example, not all training records are kept up to date. This makes it difficult to track and monitor what each member of staff has completed. This shortfall has not had any direct impact on the safety or well-being of children and young people.

The registered manager's report on the quality of care was not sent to Ofsted within the required timescales. This is a breach in regulation and hinders the regulator's ability to monitor the service to ensure that children and young people are safe.

Regulation 44 visits have continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these were virtual visits. The registered manager takes action to address any identified shortfalls in a timely manner.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c))	01/12/2020
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, to complete work on sexual health with the children and young people.	01/12/2020
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 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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(v)) In particular, ensure risk assessments are in place and shared with the staff team.	01/12/2020

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. use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(e) and (h))	01/12/2020
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Recommendation

- The processes the registered person puts in place to enable such a review to take place should allow for a report to be generated at least once every six months. The generated report should be sent to Ofsted and the placing local authority of all children in the home who are children looked after. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.3)

In particular, to send the regulation 45 report to Ofsted within 28 days of completion.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC034953

Registered provider: Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Calderdale School Effectiveness Service, 2nd Floor, Westgate House, Westgate, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX1 1PS

Responsible individual: Claire Brodie

Registered manager: Zoe Hygate

Inspector

Debra Boldy, Social Care Inspector

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