

SC036240

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to six children and young people who need support with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager has been registered since February 2019.

Visit dates: 30 September to 1 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 15 April 2019

Previous inspection judgement: 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

Staff do not fully understand young people's complex behaviours. Staff training records are unclear. It is difficult to ascertain whether all staff have attended training, specifically, to understand the main risks for the young people living at the home.

Staff help young people to develop independence skills, but these are not always monitored effectively. Important areas of young people's care have been neglected. Ineffective checks have meant that their accommodation is in a poor state of cleanliness.

Education for young people has been a challenge during the pandemic. Staff have been creative in using incentives, and activities, to encourage continued progress. Although this has been met with a mixed response, there have been significant improvements in attendance.

Young people found the lockdown challenging. Rules were not always followed. Staff used various methods to ensure that contact was maintained with families during this time. They used outside space to maintain distance, and they also used technology to keep in touch.

The safety of children

Risk management plans for young people identify the risks they are exposed to. The strategies to safeguard against these risks are not effective. They have limited impact on the monitoring of young people and in reducing their behaviours.

The manager and staff work together with partner agencies to meet young people's complex needs. Although progress is limited, staff remain focused in promoting young people's progress and achievement.

Medication administration processes have improved. Staff have responsibility for the safety of this system. There are regular audits. This means that the staff's support of young people's health and well-being has improved.

Systems for monitoring when young people are missing from the home, or return home late, are effective. Staff follow the procedures and an independent return home interview is always offered. This means that young people can discuss the reasons for going missing or being absent without consent.

There are a low number of incidents of physical intervention. When incidents do occur, records are detailed with clear analysis. Reflective discussions take place with the young person, and with staff.

Leaders and managers

The manager has not challenged the local authority effectively in relation to placing young people at the home whose needs cannot be met. This means that the safety and well-being of all young people has not been prioritised.

When practice concerns are identified with the staff team, the approach to this is not consistent. The manager cannot guarantee that all the staff who are working with young people are monitored.

Relationships with partner agencies, including health and social care, are good. They acknowledge the challenges posed by the pandemic, and the impact on the support given to young people.

One requirement made at the last inspection has not been met. This is repeated with additional requirements and recommendations.

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 they consider a placing authority's or 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))	16/11/2020
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; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—	16/11/2020

that each child is registered as a patient with a general medical practitioner and a registered dental practitioner; and that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(b)(c))	
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))	16/11/2020

Recommendations

- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risk to them. ('Guide to Children's homes regulations including the quality standards', Page 61, 13.1)
- The registered person should support staff to be ambitious for every child in the home and to gain skills and experience that enable them to actively support each child to achieve their potential. To ensure that staff can understand and can meet each child's needs, in line with their responsibilities, the registered person themselves will need to have a high level of understanding of the needs of the children in their care. ('Guide to Children's homes regulations including the quality standards', Page 52, 10.5)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC036240

Registered provider: Derby City Council

Registered provider address: Derby City Council, Treasurers Department, Council House, Corporation Street, Derby DE1 2FE

Responsible individual: Sharon Green

Registered manager: Simeon Howell

Inspector

Simon Hunter, Social Care Inspector

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