

SC037762

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The local authority operates this home. The home is now registered to care for up to five children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The aim of the home is to provide stable and consistent care to children in need of medium- to long-term placements.

The registered manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2011.

Visit dates: 1 to 2 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 11 March 2020

Previous inspection judgement: inadequate

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 the following serious concern in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit:

- There has been a repeated failure to 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.

The care of children

The children enjoy the company of the staff who care for them. Nurturing and responsive relationships are evident between children and staff. Children enjoy spending time with the staff, engaging in conversations about education and cooking skills. Children told the inspector, with abundant enthusiasm, about their plans. These included interviews for college and moving to more independent living arrangements.

The home is clean and welcoming with appropriate hygiene facilities in place for the washing and sanitising of hands. Freshly painted walls add a splash of colour, and the soft furnishings make the home feel comfortable and relaxed. There is adequate space for the children to spend time by themselves outside their bedrooms, or in the company of others, and ample seating for the children and the staff to enjoy a meal together if they wish.

The staff supported the children to engage in educational studies when not accessing formal education due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The staff provided the children with appropriate activities to encourage learning alongside material provided by the school. This included weighing out baking ingredients to make cakes and promoting life skills through budgeting. A child told the inspectors that they had learned how to budget and could now manage their own money. Another child continued to access formal education, supported by the staff taking them to and collecting them from school daily.

All the children have an appropriate education placement to return to in September 2020.

The safety of children

The registered manager did not effectively manage, report or record a safeguarding concern in accordance with policy or regulation. Subsequently, the staff did not offer the child healthcare services or help the child to understand the impact of their actions in relation to the COVID-19 outbreak. The staff review of this incident with children was not timely, clear or professionally recorded. Furthermore, a senior member of staff did not escalate this concern with senior leaders during the review of this incident with the independent visitor, resulting in further delay. Senior leaders have taken this very seriously, and the interim manager has completed an internal investigation with clear actions and outcomes.

The registered manager had not considered, and therefore monitored, a child's risk of online gaming, as identified in the child's care plan. The interim manager or social worker is unaware of what access the child has to social media or online chat forums. This level of awareness into children's online connectivity is poor and represents unsafe practice. Furthermore, the staff failed to act or respond in accordance with the home's safeguarding policy when the child acted unusually and out of character. The staff made efforts to address the initial impact on the child, but neither the staff nor the interim manager considered the wider risk of exploitation. At the time of this report, an investigation is under way.

The staff have attended safeguarding virtual training sessions during the coronavirus restrictions. Staff who were unable to participate were emailed learning materials and resources. Staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures and whom they are to report to if a concern arises.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager has been on sick leave since July 2020. There are continuing regulatory failures, which have not been fully resolved since the March 2020 inspection.

The registered manager does not have an established or maintained system in place for the monitoring, reviewing and evaluating of the quality of care provided for children living in this home. The quality of care report lacks the direct feedback and opinions of the children. This is a missed opportunity to show the children that their views and opinions are valued and acted on. At the time of this report, a quality of care review report had not been submitted to Ofsted in 2020. This clearly evidences a continued lack of management oversight.

Senior leaders have appointed a new interim manager in accordance with the home's action plan. The interim manager has been in post since 27 July 2020 and has started to implement change. He has devised a new risk assessment tool and created a monitoring document to ensure that the home operates in accordance with regulations and best practice.

Senior leaders have revised the medication policy. This now provides links to external documents for staff to use in recording and reporting of medicines, such as the safe disposal of medications. The current interim manager demonstrates a clear understanding of what to do in various medication scenarios, and the staff have received medication training. Despite these efforts, two members of staff did not follow internal guidance for the safe disposal of medication.

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 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— that staff help each child to— understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs; and understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv))	31/10/2020
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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;	31/10/2020*

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)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b))*	
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— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f))	31/10/2020
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that— staff follow procedures in line with the medication policy.	31/10/2020
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ('the quality of care review report'). The registered person must—	31/10/2020

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

(Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(4)(a)(5))

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC037762

Registered provider: Portsmouth City Council

Registered provider address: Portsmouth City Council, Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth PO1 2EA

Responsible individual: Sarah Daly

Registered manager: Calvin George

Inspector

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector

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