

SC040509

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to three young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. The home is managed by the local authority.

Visit dates: 9 to 10 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 28 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 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

During the assurance visit, it was not possible to speak to the young people about their experiences of living in the home. However, staff spoken to demonstrate that they have a good understanding of the young people in their care.

Staff are proactive in supporting young people to build trusted and secure relationships. That said, some young people have at times demonstrated inconsistencies in their relationships with each other and staff. Records of key work sessions show that staff help young people to understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others.

One young person has continued to attend education during lockdown. For those whose education provision was closed, staff have been proactive in encouraging them to complete some educational activities, albeit with limited success. Staff advocate on behalf of young people to ensure that they receive the educational support they need.

Staff place the health and well-being of young people at the centre of their practice. Staff have been proactive in ensuring that a young person received specialist help and support in relation to their cannabis misuse. Furthermore, staff have benefited from regular consultations with a clinical psychologist.

Young people have been supported to maintain contact with their family and friends. As restrictions have eased, one young person has resumed overnight stays at their family home. A transition plan is in place for them to return back home permanently.

The safety of children

Staff understand how to manage risk and keep young people safe. Risk-taking behaviours, such as cannabis misuse and going missing from the home, are challenged and addressed by staff.

There were significant concerns for one young person relating to child sexual exploitation and going missing from home. The manager appropriately escalated her concerns and the young person was moved to ensure their welfare and safety.

The young person also struggled with relationships in the home. This led to a number of challenging incidents and some staff have been subject to racist behaviour. The racist behaviour was reported to the police and the young person was issued with a Community Resolution Order. Ofsted was notified of these incidents.

There are clear boundaries and expectations of behaviour that young people understand and, in the main, adhere to.

There have been no complaints or allegations during this period.

Leaders and managers

As well as managing this home, the registered manager is the service manager for the whole residential service within the authority. A new manager and deputy have been appointed. The designated manager has visited the home and met with the young people and staff, and a handover period with the registered manager is planned.

The registered manager acknowledged that they have been through a difficult period. A number of staff have been off work due to COVID-19 shielding. The gaps in the rota have been filled by the use of regular bank staff to help maintain consistency.

Staff spoken to said that they feel supported by the registered manager. However, staff have not had regular formal supervision. This was a requirement at the last inspection and is repeated.

The registered manager and staff ensure that young people's plans are regularly reviewed, considering the COVID-19 outbreak and the easing of restrictions. Staff clearly understand these plans and implement them appropriately.

Strong relationships with partner agencies have continued. Strategy meetings and care planning meetings have taken place via video link. Placing social workers confirm that there is good communication between them and the home.

The independent visitor continues to monitor the progress and well-being of the young people. Visits were carried out virtually during lockdown. The visitor has returned to on-site visits.

Eight requirements and two recommendations were made at the last inspection. All but two of the requirements are met and the two recommendations have been addressed.

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— (a) mutual respect and trust;	30/10/20

(b) an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and (c) positive responses to other children and adults. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (i) meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; (ii) help each child to develop socially aware behaviour. In particular, the home should ensure that children are helped to understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and on the safety and well-being of others. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c) and (2)(a)(i)(ii))	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— (a) undertake appropriate continuing professional development; (b) receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(a)(b))	30/10/20

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC040509

Registered provider: Salford City Council

Registered provider address: Civic Centre, Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester M27 5DA

Responsible individual: Michael Kelly

Registered manager: Vicki Blood

Inspector

Michelle Bacon, social care inspector

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