

SC061439

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a private company. It provides care and accommodation for up to five children and/or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities and/or mental disorders.

The manager has been in post since 25 May 2020 and is in the process of registering with Ofsted.

Visit dates: 30 September to 1 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 27 August 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

The young people have positive relationships with staff. They learn to trust and rely on staff and this helps them to feel safe and supported.

Education remains a priority through the COVID-19 pandemic. The young people have access to a wide range of educational resources at the home's on-site school. Staff have worked with the on-site teacher to provide the young people with a varied and stimulating education timetable. This means that the young people are better prepared for their return to more formal education either at the on-site school or at a mainstream provision.

The young people continue to access the services they need to promote good health, including their mental health. As a result, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, young people have received the health support they need to maintain their physical and emotional health and well-being.

Staff help the young people to understand and adapt to living within the restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, they know when to use personal protective equipment, and know they need to ensure that they maintain social distancing. These measures reduce the likelihood of the young people becoming infected with the virus.

Two young people have successfully moved on from the home into new accommodation since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff worked with these young people, and their social workers, to ensure that detailed plans were in place to support the young people to gain the skills they need for the future. This means that the pandemic has not prevented the young people from moving towards adulthood and more independence.

The safety of children

There has been an increase in safeguarding events for some children since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the use of physical restraint has increased. To support the young people, staff have provided more one-to-one keywork sessions. This has given the young people more opportunities to talk about their worries and concerns. Consequently, the young people are able to find alternative ways to manage their anxieties.

The young people are able to spend more time with the home's psychologist. Staff are aware of changes to the young people's behaviours and quickly arrange these sessions when necessary. As a result, the young people's behaviours have become more settled. One young person said, 'Things were tough for a while, but I know that

the staff are there for me. I do feel safe living here, this is the safest place that I have lived.'

The young people's risk assessments and safety protocols are regularly reviewed by a multidisciplinary team. These meetings include input from young people's social workers, leaders and managers and the home's psychologist and psychiatrist. Staff encourage the young people to voice their views and opinions as part of these reviews. This approach helps the young people to understand the risks to their safety and the actions that staff will take to help to protect them from harm.

Leaders and managers have revised and amended staff recruitment procedures. This reduces the risk of the young people being exposed to unsuitable adults. A stable staff team means that the young people are able to build good relationships with those responsible for their care.

Leaders and managers

The manager has been in post since May 2020 and is in the process of applying to registered with Ofsted. She knows the young people well and this enables her to oversee their care and development effectively. This means that the young people continue to make good progress. The manager has met the requirements and recommendations set at the last inspection.

Leaders and managers work in partnership with other agencies and professionals. These positive relationships mean that all parties are fully aware of the young people's needs and how to meet these. An independent reviewing officer commented, 'My experience of the children's home is all positive. The manager and staff respect [Name of the young person] and his mother is very happy with the care afforded to her son.'

The manager regularly reviews the quality of care for the young people through internal and external monitoring systems. Consequently, leaders and managers quickly identify any practice shortfalls and address these areas.

The young people are looked after by staff who receive training to meet the young people's needs. As a result, the young people make good progress in all areas of their development.

There are some staff vacancies at this time. This does not negatively impact on the quality of care received by the young people because permanent staff work additional shifts to provide continuity of care. When this is not possible, a dedicated team of casual staff, who are known to the young people, cover these shifts. This means that the young people benefit from consistent care.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC061439

Registered provider: Young Foundations Limited

Registered provider address: 7 Grosvenor Street, Chester CH1 2DD

Responsible individual: Niall Kelly

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Debbie White, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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