

SC356963

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The children's home is owned and operated by a local authority. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children or young people who may have behavioural and/or emotional difficulties. The manager is registered with Ofsted.

Visit dates: 2 to 3 November 2020

Previous inspection date: 26 November 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

Children and young people receive a good standard of care. They benefit from routines and boundaries, which provide them with stability in a nurturing and homely environment. Children and young people say that they feel safe and secure and have developed positive relationships with the dedicated staff team.

Children and young people access regular one-to-one key-work sessions with staff, where they can express their wishes and feelings. Children and young people take part in fortnightly meetings where they help to plan menus and activities and share their views on the running of the home.

Staff ensure that children and young people are listened to and, where appropriate, action is taken. For example, one young person told the inspector he needed some work clothing and this was provided on the same day. Another young person asked for a laptop for college and this has also been addressed. This demonstrates that the children and young people are listened to by staff.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have supported children and young people to access positive activities in the home and in the community. For example, they have provided gym equipment, board games and sports equipment. These activities have helped to keep children and young people active and engaged during the pandemic.

The children and young people have stayed in touch with their families and friends. Staff have been proactive in facilitating this by making good use of telephone calls and texting updates to family members. As COVID-19 restrictions have eased, normal family visits have resumed.

Staff place a high value on education, and work in partnership with the virtual school and colleges to ensure the children and young people have access to education that meets their needs.

Staff have supported the children and young people to understand the impact of COVID-19. This has helped to reduce the anxieties that the children and young people have experienced during the pandemic.

The safety of children

There are behavior management plans and risk assessments in place. These are reviewed regularly by the manager in consultation with social workers and other agencies to help safeguard the children and young people.

Staff access training and consultations with the in-house clinical psychologist, which supports them in their roles. This supports staff in helping the children and young

people to begin to develop strategies to manage their own behavioral and emotional needs.

The staff have regular team meetings, handovers and supervision. This enables staff to reflect on and develop their practice, which helps to better protect the children and young people.

When children and young people go missing from the home, staff follow policies and procedures effectively and work in partnership with other agencies to help reduce the risks. This ensures that when children and young people return, they are reassured and have access to a return-home interview. This helps to reduce the risk of reoccurrences.

When there are incidents of the child's trauma, the staff respond effectively and record all incidents. They are supported by the manager and the in-house clinical psychologist to help the children and young people to feel safe in their home. However, there have been occasions when staff have not been able to manage the children and young people's behaviors. This has led to the police being called on three occasions to support them.

The staff use restorative practice, which allows the children and young people to rebuild relationships and develop an understanding of how their behaviors can impact on them and others. As a result, children and young people learn how to make better choices, which helps to reduce their risk-taking behaviour.

Leaders and managers

The manager and deputy manager are children and young people focused and are positive role models to the children, young people and staff team.

There are monitoring systems in place, which are continually being improved. This enables the manager and deputy manager to have good oversight of the children and young people's progress and staff development.

The manager and deputy manager continue to work in partnership with specialist agencies, such as the children and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) and the youth offending service to help meet the needs of the children and young people. When needed, the manager will make referrals for specialist support and assessments to ensure that the children and young people's needs are fully met.

All complaints are effectively addressed in agreed timescales and the manager provides feedback to complainants as required. As a result, there are positive links in the community.

Staff access regular training, supervision, team meetings and clinical supervision to support the staff's developmental needs. However, not all staff receive annual

appraisals, which includes the views of the children and young people. This is a missed opportunity to inform and develop staff's practice.

The manager challenges professionals and other agencies and advocates on behalf of the children and young people. This ensures that they have access to the services they need.

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— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(xi)) In particular, ensure that members of staff are provided with the skills to manage behaviour effectively.	01/02/2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))	01/02/2021

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC356963

Registered provider: Kirklees Council

Registered provider address: Kirklees Metropolitan Council, Civic Centre 3,
Huddersfield, Yorkshire HD1 2EY

Responsible individual: Elaine McShane

Registered manager: Benjamin Lancaster

Inspector

Noel Cooper, Social Care Inspector

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