

SC362965

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private national company which provides care and education services. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for one child or young person.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 19 February 2014.

**Visit dates:** 17 to 18 December 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 17 December 2019

**Previous inspection judgement:** Sustained effectiveness

## 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 child living in this home, who has experienced significant trauma and instability in his life, is happy and settled. The consistent, nurturing care provided has enabled him to form positive relationships with staff. From his starting point, the child has made good progress in all aspects of his development. The feedback from professionals is unanimously positive. One professional said: 'The staff are always adapting and changing their responses to the child's new emerging needs, so he can progress. They are very good at building his self-esteem.'

Because of the manager's proactive approach, a suitable education provision is imminently about to be secured for the child. In the interim, staff have actively supported the child's learning during COVID-19 and worked closely with education providers to support his learning.

Staff support the child effectively to develop hobbies and interests within the local community. For example, he is encouraged to attend local clubs and they have facilitated him making friends locally. The high level of praise and encouragement the staff give the child for his achievements, no matter how small, helps him to develop confidence and feel good about himself.

Staff meet this child's physical and emotional health needs well. They provide him with high levels of emotional warmth, clear routines and boundaries. This, alongside the regular support and guidance of in-house clinicians provided to both staff and child, is helping him to start to make sense of his past experiences.

Staff support the child to maintain his relationships with his family safely and help him to reflect on his feelings about his family members. This helps to enhance his sense of identity.

The child's wishes and feelings are listened to and staff act upon them in respect of the daily running of the home. For example, the child chooses activities and menus, while at the same time being supported to make healthy and sensible choices. The child's wishes are incorporated into his individual care plan.

## **The safety of children**

The positive relationships the child has with staff provide him with a sense of security and safety. The child explained that staff looking after him are always fair.

Detailed and regularly updated risk assessments and risk management plans, implemented by staff, help to keep the child safe. The child is fully involved in the review of his risk management plan. This helps to motivate him to work towards the agreed goals, as he himself has identified what he wants to achieve.

Clear plans guide staff on what behavioural strategies are best to use with the child, so that when incidents happen, staff respond consistently. The child has not gone missing, but staff know what to do should this occur. The risk of this occurring is

reduced by high levels of staff supervision, as well as the child engaging in a wide range of activities that keep him occupied.

By using consistent behaviour support strategies, including the use of high levels of praise and rewards, staff have helped the child to better regulate his emotions. Staff only use physical interventions as a very last resort. High-quality, timely recording of debriefs with staff and the child always follow significant incidents and physical interventions. This ensures clear management oversight and promotes learning to continually improve practice in this area.

### **Leaders and managers**

Leadership and management oversight and monitoring systems ensure that the care provided to the child is as good as it can be. The manager and her deputy are vigilant and reflective about their practice to ensure that they look after the child in a caring and sensitive way. The manager and her deputy's caring and aspirational approach filters down to the staff team. They all want the child to be happy and to reach his full potential.

The therapeutic approach used within the home is well understood by staff and it is having a positive impact on the quality of care they provide. Regular input and guidance from the home's in-house therapist helps the staff to develop insight and understanding into the child's specific and complex needs. This enables the staff to develop their skills and agree strategies to respond consistently to new and emerging needs. As a team, the staff enjoy caring for the child and working with one another. The atmosphere in the home is one of happiness and warmth.

Staff receive regular supervision from their manager and undertake a comprehensive range of mandatory training. This helps develop their skills in caring for vulnerable children. However, not all staff have completed some refresher training as promptly as they should have in order to keep fully up to date with new developments and the best practice in caring safely for children.

Professionals spoken to during the inspection were unanimously positive about levels of communication between them, the manager and the staff. Strong partnership working is helping to ensure that the child's plan remains effective and that he continues to make progress.

### **What does the children's home need to do to improve?**

#### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should support staff to gain skills and experience that enable them to actively support each child to achieve their potential. In particular, staff should complete all required refresher training in a timelier way. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5)

## **Children's home details**

**Unique reference number:** SC362965

**Registered provider:** Five Rivers Child Care Limited

**Registered provider address:** Five Rivers Child Care, 47 Bedwin Street, Salisbury  
SP1 3UT

**Responsible individual:** Christopher Newman

**Registered manager:** Zoe Ratcliffe

## **Inspector**

Joy Howick, Social Care Inspector

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