

SC371723

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children who have social and emotional difficulties. The home has been without a registered manager since February 2019.

Visit dates: 17 to 18 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 12 March 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Declined in 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

No children have lived at this home since March 2020. Difficulty in appointing a manager and unsustainable interim management arrangements prompted the provider to make the decision to cease the day-to-day operation of the home. Consequently, the two children who lived at the home moved to other homes operated by the organisation and the staff were redeployed.

This inspection found that some aspects of the physical condition of the home require attention. For example, there is no bed in two of the children's bedrooms and broken draws in another. There is a broken cabinet in the conservatory and insufficient chairs for the dining table. The handle is missing from the laundry room door. The responsible individual is aware of the improvements needed to the physical condition of the home and is making plans for the home to be adequately maintained and furnished prior to children moving in.

The safety of children

The responsible individual reported to the inspector that health and safety and fire checks are being maintained while the home is vacant. However, the records of these checks could not be located during the visit. This means it is unclear that the home is a safe place for children to live.

Leaders and managers

The home has been without a registered manager for over 18 months. There are no staff currently identified to work at the home.

The provider anticipates that the home will be ready for occupation by children in early 2021. Following this inspection, the provider made a request to Ofsted to vary the home's conditions of registration. This has resulted in the provider having a new condition added to its registration that means the home is temporarily closed. This period of closure is going to be used by the organisation to make the improvements necessary for children to live at the home, including appointing a manager and a staff team and ensuring that the premises are safe and meet good standards.

As no children have lived at the home since March 2020 the previous inspection requirements and recommendation are untested and have been remade.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i)(ii))	31/01/2021
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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(d))	31/01/2021
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— ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(d))	31/01/2021
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children’s home if there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a))	31/01/2021

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 (3)(c))	31/01/2021
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person')— within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(c))	31/01/2021

Recommendations

- Ensure that where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC371723

Registered provider: Educare Adolescent Services Limited

Registered provider address: Venture House, 12 Prospect Business Park, Longford Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 0LG

Responsible individual: Agata Doksiewicz

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Alison Cooper, Social Care Inspector

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