

SC372611

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This service is owned by a private company. The home is registered for two children, irrespective of gender, aged 10 to 17 years. Children come to live at the home because of family or placement breakdowns. Some children have difficulties that make their situation very challenging; others choose not to live in a family setting at this time. Some children may have experienced abuse.

The home has a registered manager, who is currently away from work. The company has put in place appropriate interim management arrangements.

Visit dates: 16 to 17 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 4 June 2019

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

Children are cared for well. Children are instrumental in devising and reviewing their individual person-centred plans. As a result, children feel listened to, valued and respected by those caring for them.

Children have formed positive relationships with staff during this period, resulting in children being increasingly settled and becoming aspirational about their futures. One child referred to the home as 'their home' and staff as their 'second family'.

Technology has been vital for children to maintain links with their family and friends, with managers purchasing an additional iPad so that children were able to make video calls.

The home's therapist advises managers and staff on the best ways to support children to understand the COVID-19 restrictions. Children are given opportunities to discuss their concerns, which helps them understand what is happening, without making them more anxious.

Staff and education providers work well together to make sure children's education is not disrupted during the COVID-19 restrictions. Daily contact was maintained via telephone, with children returning to school as soon as government guidance allowed. Children attained good examination results, including those children who had not been receiving education for some time.

Staff have been creative in keeping children occupied during this time. They engaged children in such activities as planting vegetables, watching them grow, then harvesting and cooking what they had grown, celebrating Easter with egg hunts, experiencing VE Day celebrations, having themed nights with foods from different parts of the world, fancy dress, trips to the beach and a holiday surfing and fishing.

The safety of children

Child-centred approaches and consistency from staff have helped to develop a positive culture in the home. Comprehensive behaviour management plans, which are regularly reviewed, with input from children, have resulted in there being few incidents of bad behaviour, and none that have required the use of physical intervention. Managers have not risk assessed whether children still need their bedroom door alarms activated at night. This means that monitoring of children could be overly intrusive.

Children at the home do not go missing, but in the event that they did, plans in place are robust and give detailed information as to what staff need to do when children go missing and when they return to the home.

Staff help children to understand risks, through key-work sessions in which they discuss a variety of topics that are relevant to the children's age and development. These sessions help children to better understand how their actions affect them and those around them. This level of understanding empowers children to make decisions that help keep them safe.

Leaders and managers

The interim manager is experienced and child-focused and has been instrumental in changing the culture of the home. Under her leadership, staff are providing consistent, child-focused care, based on sound knowledge and understanding of children's needs. She has also responded well to the challenges imposed by COVID-19.

The interim manager advocated well for one child when she felt that plans being put in place for the child's transition were not appropriate for the child's needs. By advocating as she did, plans have been amended so that the child will get ongoing support once they leave the home.

The independent visitor has carried out virtual monthly visits during recent months to monitor the progress and well-being of the children. Despite the visits being done remotely, by using technology, the independent visitor has been able to review records, speak to children and their families, and consult professionals.

Supervision for staff has been prioritised, with staff receiving regular and frequent supervision which is reflective, informative and gives opportunities for staff to learn.

Managers have continued to prioritise staff training at the home, with all staff having opportunities to access a variety of learning opportunities. This has resulted in increased knowledge and confidence when working with children living at the home.

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 registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)) This refers to the lack of risk assessment in relation to bedroom door alarms.	30/10/2020

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC372611

Registered provider: Bryn Melyn Care Limited

Registered provider address: Bryn Melyn House, 3 Hawksworth Road, Central Park, Telford, Shropshire TF2 9TU

Responsible individual: Wayne Price

Registered manager: Christine Downing

Inspector

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

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