

SC372630

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company and is registered to accommodate four children. The home consists of two two-bedded houses. Both houses are detached and share the same garden. They have independent access, in a very quiet residential area.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2018. She is currently working to complete the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for health and social care and children and young people's services (residential management pathway).

Visit dates: 2 to 3 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 12 June 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

There are currently two children living in the home. Both children have lived at the home for a number of years.

Staff work hard to develop and maintain trusting and supportive relationships with children. Staff advocate and represent children's views and wishes effectively. One professional commented that staff 'go above and beyond in their support for children'. As a result, children feel valued, supported and are settled in the home.

During COVID-19 restrictions, staff have ensured that children have been able to stay in touch with their family and friends. Where family time was restricted for one child, the registered manager worked with professionals to safely restore this. This had a positive impact on the emotional well-being of the child and resulted in a reduction in the number of incidents in the home.

Staff understand the complex health needs of children and support them to engage with professionals. Consequently, they asked the home's therapist to provide individual support to both children during the lockdown period. This allows children to receive specific and specialised care that is relevant to their needs.

Staff prepare children to move on from the home and to live independently effectively. One child has recently left the home. The move was planned and well managed by the registered manager following consultation with the home's therapist. This support allowed him to move successfully into a placement which could meet his needs.

Since the last inspection, staff have made improvements to the décor of the home to make it a homely environment for children. However, there are still some areas of the property that look tired and would benefit from further maintenance and redecoration.

The safety of children

Staff help children to understand risk by holding regular key-work sessions. These sessions are specific to the children's needs and help them to understand danger. The home also includes the clinical therapist in supporting key risk management decisions. This approach helps to reduce the number of significant incidents and keep children safe.

On most occasions, staff have dealt with children's significant challenges well. The registered manager ensures that risk assessments are reviewed following an incident and that reflection has taken place. This reflection allows children to learn from their

experiences. However, the registered manager has not always notified Ofsted of all serious incidents. This prevents the regulator from having oversight of the home.

Staff respond appropriately to incidents of children going missing from the home. As a result, missing-from-home incidents are low. On an occasion where one child did go missing, one professional described the staff team as 'going above and beyond to return the child to the home'. Following missing-from-home episodes, staff have ensured that children are spoken to by an independent person and have completed key-work sessions. These actions have prevented further incidents and maintained children's safety.

Staff work with professionals to keep children safe when accessing online resources in the home. Furthermore, all staff have completed online safety training, which enables them to identify risks to children. However, on one occasion, a child at risk of exploitation was able to access an adult website, which led to her going missing from the home for three days. During this time, the child met up with an older male who she had talked to online. A shortfall in the response of staff to the online risks presented had an impact on the safety of the child.

When appointing new staff, the registered manager has not consistently followed safe recruitment practice. For example, the full work history for one member of staff has not been thoroughly checked prior to commencing work in the home. This has the potential to compromise the safety of children when recruiting new staff.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager is helpful and supportive towards staff. Staff report that she is available when they need her. In summarising the registered manager's support for children and staff, one professional described her as 'amazing'. This approach is underpinned by regular supervision sessions.

Staff receive a wide range of training which is specific and relevant to the needs of the children in the home. This enables staff to develop and apply their understanding and practice to meet the children's needs.

The registered manager is child focused and places the children at the centre of everything she does. During lockdown, she organised a surprise cinema evening to celebrate a child's birthday in the home. This included gathering recordings and video messages from the key people in his life. The child appeared happy when sharing his experiences of the evening with the inspector. This event had a positive impact on the child's confidence and emotional well-being.

Since the last inspection, the home has experienced a number of changes to the staff team. However, a core team of regular staff has remained in place, which provides consistent care for children. Staff have worked to cover gaps in the home's rota, which has reduced the need for the use of agency staff. This means that children are consistently cared for by people who know them well.

The registered manager has good oversight of the home. She makes good use of the audit tools and support systems in place and as a result, she understands the home's strengths and weaknesses. She regularly reviews the quality of care in the home and puts in place actions to improve this where needed.

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— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) This refers to damaged areas and furniture in the home that require repair work and replacement. A child's bathroom also requires updating and redecoration.	14 January 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 staff— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(v)(vi))	31 December 2020

This specifically relates to staff's understanding and implementation of each child's risk assessment, and their role in keeping children safe, particularly regarding online safety and risks of exploitation.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) This relates to the recruitment of staff and matters highlighted in Schedule 2. In the recruitment of staff, the registered manager must ensure that full employment history has been provided and validated before any individual commences work in the home.	31 December 2020
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)) This relates to three significant incidents in the home with children which required police involvement. On each occasion, the registered manager failed to notify Ofsted.	31 December 2020

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children's homes are nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations, such as alarms and food hygiene. However, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. This refers to the use of an alarm on a child's bedroom door where the risk of harm to the child is assessed to be low. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC372630

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: Shanice Jackson

Inspector

Dean Wilton, Social Care Inspector

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