

SC387148

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to five children who may have physical and/or learning disabilities. The home is run by a private company and provides education on site at a registered school.

The home has a registered manager in place.

Visit dates: 7 to 8 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 22 May 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

This home provides permanent and shared care for young people who have complex needs and disabilities. A consistent staff team is in place and they understand each young person's individual needs. This has led to young people and their families developing trusting relationships with staff. A parent said, 'I am happy with it, my son has come on so much.'

Young people continue to keep in touch with their families. Staff have been creative during lockdown periods in the use of technology and face-to-face contact in open spaces. This has helped to maintain these important relationships for young people.

Young people attend the company school and have continued their education. Staff and teachers work together to ensure that all young people learn and make progress in their education. Outdoor and indoor activities are varied and well planned. Photographs show young people having fun and enjoying themselves.

Young people's views are gained through various methods of communication and from staff understanding each young person's gestures and mannerisms. For example, choices of clothing, food, activities, likes and dislikes are well captured. However, a young person's legal right to have an independent person and befriender has not been championed by staff.

Care planning is much improved as young people's healthcare needs are better identified and understood by staff. Also, a speech and language therapist provides support and advice when necessary.

The safety of children

Clear and detailed risk assessments are in place and staff receive regular safeguarding training to enhance their understanding of their duties in protecting young people with disabilities.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are understood by staff. However, on one occasion, the allegations management process was not followed correctly. Key professionals were not informed of an allegation this was addressed by the manager during the inspection.

Behaviour management plans are improved and guide staff in managing any challenging behaviour consistently. As a result, behaviour is managed successfully and there are very few physical restraints. Staff are trained in a recognised method of restraint should it be necessary to hold young people to keep them safe.

Fire safety measures are improved following the requirement from the last inspection. A fire safety assessment has been completed and no further concerns are identified. Health and safety arrangements are, on the whole, effective. However, a bathroom drain cover needs replacing and a bed is awaiting removal

from the first-floor landing. These are health and safety hazards to young people and staff. Despite staff's efforts to address this, the hazards remain.

A further requirement has been met. Namely, effective safer recruitment practices now help to check that all staff are suitable to work with children. Checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service and obtaining references from employers abroad are part of this process.

Leaders and managers

This home is managed by an experienced and qualified registered manager. She is supported by a service manager and two senior staff. Together, they have implemented and reviewed young people's care plans, carefully considering the COVID-19 outbreak and the changing restrictions. Staff clearly understand these plans and implement them appropriately.

A development plan is in place to further improve the standard of care provided. Management audits are regularly undertaken and provide an overview of care practice. However, a serious incident was not notified to professionals, including Ofsted. This was addressed by the manager during the inspection.

External independent visits continue to monitor the progress and well-being of young people and raise actions for improvement. Visits were carried out monthly via video link, which ensured consistent independent oversight during lockdown. The visitor has recently returned to on-site visits.

Relationships with young people's families are effective. All professionals contacted spoke positively about the staff, the communication with them and the progress that young people make. During restrictions, all meetings with professionals continued in the best interest of young people through video link and telephone calls.

A core team of regular staff provides consistent care for young people. They are working together effectively to maintain this stability during the COVID-19 pandemic. This continuity provided predictability and reassurance to young people and their families.

Staff are suitably qualified or working towards a recognised qualification. They also have regular training, supervision and hands-on support from the manager to keep them up to date on emerging information.

All requirements from the last inspection have been met. A further two are made alongside a recommendation to improve practice further.

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 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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; 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 (2)(a)(v) and (d))	25/10/2020
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	25/10/2020

Recommendations

- Ensure that staff take the initiative in identifying other bodies and organisations that must play a part for children and engage with those relevant bodies proactively, advocating for the children in their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.7). In particular, to gaining the services of an independent visitor.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC387148

Registered provider: Fairfield Residential Limited

Responsible individual: Kendall Cope

Registered manager: Debra McGarrigan

Inspectors

Caroline Jones, Social Care Inspector

Caroline Bertram, Social Care Inspector

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