

SC423617

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children and young people with emotional and social difficulties. The home is privately owned.

The registered manager left on 30 October 2020. A new manager is in post and is making an application to register with Ofsted.

Visit dates: 3 to 4 November 2020

Previous inspection date: 19 November 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 young people at this assurance visit.

The care of children

1. Young people have been able to access education throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. When schools were only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions, school work was provided for young people to complete at home. This allowed young people to maintain their learning.
2. Staff have ensured that young people's physical and emotional health needs have been met. When young people have needed specialist support, for example with their emotional health, staff have ensured that young people have been able to access this support.
3. Staff have helped young people to improve their relationships with each other by encouraging them to spend quality time together. Because of this, young people now get on better with each other.
4. Throughout the pandemic, staff have supported young people to stay in contact with their families. Due to the changing government guidance, this has involved a mix of visits and telephone calls.
5. Staff did their best to keep young people busy when they were unable to access activities in the community because of COVID-19 restrictions. However, young people have struggled with not being able to take part in their normal hobbies. One young person, who enjoys trampolining, was disappointed that their request for a trampoline for the garden was not granted.

The safety of children

6. During the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have ensured that young people understand the impact of the virus. Young people told the inspector that a useful resource pack given to them by staff has helped them understand what they need to do to reduce the potential risks to themselves.
7. Until recently, the young people did not always get on with each other. This resulted in them sometimes becoming aggressive towards each other. Following such incidents, staff have used a restorative approach to help young people take responsibility for their actions. This has been successful and there has been a reduction in such incidents.
8. There have been some isolated incidents of young people going missing from the home. In response to such incidents, staff take appropriate action to ensure that young people are found and returned home as swiftly as possible.

9. Staff use bedroom door alarms to monitor young people's movements during the night, although the risk of young people leaving the house at night is assessed as low. The manager has not kept the use of this monitoring system under review.
10. The inspector identified that a mounted fire extinguisher was preventing the kitchen door from closing. A door between the lounge and laundry room was also observed to be missing. These shortfalls had the potential to increase the risk of harm in the event of a fire. However, the manager took immediate action to address these concerns when they were pointed out.

Leaders and managers

11. There have been recent changes to the leadership and management team. The registered manager ended his employment with the provider on 30 October 2020. The deputy manager has been appointed as the home's manager and is in the process of submitting her application to register with Ofsted. Furthermore, a new responsible individual was appointed on 10 August 2020.
12. The new manager and responsible individual are not yet established in their roles. They do not yet have a full understanding of the home's areas for development, although they are proactive when shortfalls are identified. A quality of care review has not been completed in the required timescales. This is a missed opportunity to better understand how to improve the care provided to young people.
13. Despite the changes to the management team, staff say that they feel supported. All staff have received regular supervisions. However, staff have not yet had their annual appraisals.
14. Throughout the pandemic, the independent visitor has continued to provide external scrutiny. However, although the findings of these visits have been shared with the home's management team, the independent visitor reports for the last three months have not been shared with Ofsted.
15. There has been a recent change of independent visitor. The home's previous responsible individual took over the role in October 2020, but this was a conflict of interest, given his recent management responsibilities for the home. Action was taken during the inspection to address this, and the original independent visitor has been reinstated.

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 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)(d))	31/12/2020
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(d))	31/12/2020
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1)(7)(a))	31/12/2020
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months.	31/12/2020

The registered person must—

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed.

(Regulation 45 (1)(4)(a))

Recommendations

- All staff must have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC423617

Registered provider: Ade cyn Childrens Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 13a Pitsford Street, Birmingham B18 6LJ

Responsible individual: Lee Ridgley

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Michelle Spruce, Social Care Inspector

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