

SC429995

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four children and young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A private provider operates the home.

Visit dates: 21 to 22 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 10 October 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Improved 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 identified the following serious concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit:

- young people's care plans do not address risks that young people pose to each other

- hazards and hygiene in the home pose a risk to young people
- safeguarding incidents are not thoroughly recorded
- one young person's needs are outside the criteria detailed in the statement of purpose.

The care of children

Young people have good relationships with staff. The manager and staff listen to young people's views about their home and their interests. Young people share jokes with staff and talk about their day. Staff tell young people that they care about them. This helps young people to trust staff and listen to their advice.

Staff support young people to enjoy regular family time. They provide transport and where necessary, go with young people to ensure they are safe. Staff get to know family members and try to develop positive relationships with them. They understand young people's feelings after a visit and give them emotional support. This means that young people can remain connected to important people in their lives.

Young people are encouraged to make choices about their free time. They usually pick their favourite places to go, which includes the beach, the zoo, a restaurant or a museum. During the COVID-19 lockdown, options for such visits were limited so staff were creative in helping to occupy young people. Staff take photographs of activities and display these in the home. This means young people have fun and have good memories about their time at the home.

When young people are preparing to move out of the home, staff understand that this can be a difficult time so offer them reassurance and advice. Staff help young people to learn some independence skills. However, these are limited to simple tasks like personal hygiene routines and keeping their bedrooms tidy. This means that young people are not fully prepared for adult life.

The manager and staff support young people to attend school or college. Where the location is some distance away, staff transport young people and talk to them about the day ahead. Staff are in regular contact with teaching staff and they share information about young people's needs. However, when young people are excluded from school or are not attending, the staff do not provide young people with structured learning. This means young people are at risk of disengaging from school or falling behind their targets.

The safety of children

Young people's relationships with each other are not always positive and sometimes harmful. In these circumstances, young people's risk assessments are not detailed and do not show how risks will be managed. The manager's monitoring and reviewing of the plans do not respond to these shortfalls.

The manager and staff respond to concerns about children. However, written records are not thorough, and the manager has not addressed this shortfall. When young people make an allegation, information is not always clearly recorded and some details are missed. This prevents the manager from scrutinising incidents and identifying practice issues effectively. This places young people at risk.

The manager has failed to ensure effective monitoring of the home's environment. Inspectors found electrical hazards in children's bedrooms, a trip hazard in the lounge and areas of poor hygiene in the kitchen. There was no evidence of the manager being aware of these dangers or of any action planned. This is a risk to young people living in the home.

The manager does not take effective action to challenge other agencies. When young people return after being missing from home, he does not ensure that return home interviews are completed each time. This means young people are not offered an opportunity to talk about why they were missing or who they were with to someone independent of the home. This impacts upon the support and intervention that are offered to young people to address the reasons why they go missing.

Leaders and managers

Staff are in the process of completing qualifications relevant to their roles. They access new training to help strengthen their skills and knowledge of caring for young people.

The staff team is stable. Staff value each other's contribution and they also share training with each other. COVID-19 has impacted on the time that the staff have to meet as a team, for example at staff meetings. This means that staff have fewer opportunities to discuss their experiences of looking after young people and the impact that this has on them.

Staff feel supported in their role and say they have good relationships with the manager and the deputy manager. This gives staff the confidence to raise any practice concerns, which ensures young people's welfare is promoted.

The staff team has positive relationships with partner agencies, including schools, advocates and police. The manager takes the views of other agencies into account when thinking about changes to the home. Staff share their knowledge of young people to help other services meet their needs.

The home's statement of purpose is not up to date. The manager and staff are caring for a young person whose needs are outside of those outlined in the statement of purpose. This means that the home is not complying with the conditions approved by Ofsted.

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, the 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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; and manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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)(a)(i)(iv)(d))	17/11/2020
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(f))	17/11/2020

The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; 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)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	17/09/2020
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Recommendations

- 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. If no education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge them to meet the child's needs under regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15).
- Staff must help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home's support and, where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27).
- The Statement of Purpose is of particular importance to this Standard (regulation 6(2)(a) and (b)(i)). Homes are required to develop and keep under review a "Statement of Purpose" (regulation 16 and schedule 1). The home's Statement of Purpose should be child-focused, indicating how the home provides individualised care to meet the Quality Standards for the children in their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5).

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC429995

Registered provider: A Significant Other Limited

Registered provider address: 2 The Calls, Leeds LS2 7JU

Responsible individual: Amanda Quinn

Registered manager: Simon Morson

Inspectors

Catherine Heron, Social Care Inspector

Susan Atkinson-Millmoor, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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