

SC471581

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for two young people who have learning disabilities. The home is privately owned.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2020. The registered manager is undertaking the level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare.

Visit dates: 14 to 15 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 10 October 2018

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

In September 2019, Ofsted agreed a request from the provider to vary their conditions of registration. A three-month condition was granted, and the home was non-operational from September 2019 until it began operating again in May 2020. The provider notified Ofsted of their intention to reopen, and Ofsted sought reassurances that the home was ready to open.

Since becoming operational again, one young person has come to live at the home. Careful planning with the young person's previous carers meant that staff were able to spend time with the young person prior to him moving. The opportunity to start building relationships with his new carers helped the young person to settle in well when he moved.

The young person benefits from a small but largely consistent staff team. This ensures that his care is well planned and that the young person continues to develop positive and secure relationships with staff.

Close working with the young person's learning disability nurse means that his health needs are met well. In addition, the young person's medication has been reviewed despite the limitations on services arising as a result of the pandemic.

The registered manager worked effectively with the child's social worker to identify a local college placement. Staff are supporting the young person to prepare for college by ensuring that a clear daily routine is in place and that he engages in planned activities at home and in the local community.

Well-thought-out direct work, arranged with the young person's communication needs in mind, helps staff to understand the young person's views. As a result, the young person routinely makes choices about food and activities. However, not all staff are skilled in communicating with the young person in his preferred form. This could limit his future progress.

Staff support the young person to keep in touch with his family. When this is not possible face to face, staff are creative and use video calling to help keep the young person connected to significant people in his life. Family members are positive about the young person's progress, describing to the inspector that the young person's speech is developing as a result of nurturing care from staff.

The safety of children

Staff work well with the learning disability nurse to help develop their practice, to meet the young person's needs. Good-quality oversight by the registered manager and reflective discussions following incidents have helped to reduce situations when staff need to hold the young person to keep him and others safe. In addition, regularly reviewed plans and risk assessments ensure that staff have current information about the risks presented to the young person and how to reduce these.

To promote the young person's safety, the registered manager has set out in the young person's plans that some internal doors in the home can be locked, if needed, and a walking belt and seat belt clip can be used to increase his safety when accessing the community. These restrictions to the young person's movement have been discussed with the social worker and are due to be confirmed in the young person's statutory plans. However, records in the home do not show when staff have locked internal doors as a safety measure. This omission is a missed opportunity to understand the effectiveness of this practice and the progress being made by the young person in regulating his behaviour.

The registered manager has made sure that the fire risk assessment and evacuation procedure reflect that the front door to the home is kept locked to support the young person's safety. The fire risk assessment has been shared with the local fire and rescue service.

Leaders and managers

The manager is new to the registered manager role. She has a child-centred and reflective approach and has a wealth of experience in supporting children who have a disability.

The newly established staff team has benefited from a good induction and the opportunity to build relationships through team training prior to the young person coming to live at the home. This helps the staff to know what is expected of them and to provide the young person with coordinated care.

Staff receive regular, good-quality supervision that helps them to reflect on and develop their practice. Staff speak highly about the support they receive from the registered manager. A mixture of face-to-face and online training means that staff are confident in their roles and responsibilities. The registered manager has a plan for the further development of the workforce.

The registered manager has good oversight of day-to-day practice. However, some records would benefit from greater attention to detail, for example in ensuring that it is clear when a parent is contacted following an incident.

The registered manager has responded to all of the requirements and recommendations from the last inspection. This included improvements to the physical environment. However, since the young person has moved into the home, there has been some damage, and some areas of the home now require attention to meet good standards. For example, the carpet is frayed up to the bathroom door,

paintwork to the bathroom door and bannister is worn, the cistern lid is missing from the upstairs toilet and there is some staining to a wall in the lounge.

The registered manager has kept the statement of purpose under review. However, updates to the statement of purpose were not sent to Ofsted as required by regulation.

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— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. 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 and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i)(ii))	13/11/2020
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))	30/09/2020

Recommendations

- The home should work in partnership with relevant people, as appropriate, to ensure that each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning and daily care. This may include the use of, and support to use, communication aids, equipment and/or any necessary language support. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 4.6)

This is with specific reference to upskilling staff in the use of Makaton.

- Where a child has an EHC plan or statement of special educational needs in which a specific type of restraint is provided for use as part of the child's day-to-day routine, the home is exempted from the recording requirement in regulation 35(4). Where these plans provide for a specific type of restraint that is not for day-to-day use, on the occasions when such a restraint is used, it must still be recorded in accordance with regulation 35(3). Any other restraint used must always be recorded as a restraint. In any case where restraint is used, it must comply with the requirements of regulation. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.61) This is with specific reference to ensuring that restrictions to young people's movement, such as locking internal doors, are agreed, recorded and reviewed.
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and should understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC471581

Registered provider: Albrighton Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Albrighton Care Ltd, Rumer Hill Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 0ET

Responsible individual: Isobel Green

Registered manager: Sara Parkes

Inspector

Alison Cooper, Social Care Inspector

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