

SC473460

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to three children and young people aged from eight to 17. The home's statement of purpose states that care is provided for children and young people who have experienced trauma and who may display a variety of difficulties.

Visit dates: 9 to 10 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 2 July 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

Children were observed to be comfortable in the home. There was easy communication and positive relationships observed between staff and children.

One child struggled to settle in since moving back into the home. However, the staff have worked hard at trying to build relationships.

Staff prioritise the educational needs of the children. Staff work well with education professionals in supporting children to adapt to changes. Children are starting to make progress with getting up earlier to engage in their education.

Staff support family time and overnight stays exceptionally well. Children are reported to be excited to share their experiences with staff after their family time.

Children's needs and views are understood by all staff. Staff advocate strongly on behalf of children to promote their views and interests.

Staff make efforts to encourage children to develop good sleep routines. However, these are not recorded, and staff's reflective diaries are not fully completed. This does not help to show the effectiveness of interventions or measure progress.

The safety of children

Staff receive good child protection training. Such training features in staff inductions and team meetings.

Staff understand the risks posed to the children. Risk assessments and behaviour management plans include strategies that help to curb risk-taking behaviours. These strategies are largely effective as very few incidents have occurred.

Challenging behaviour is managed well. Children are given an opportunity to reflect on incidents and understand consequences of actions. Sanctions are appropriate, and children are also rewarded for good behaviour. This helps children to improve their behaviour. There have been no reported incidents of physical restraint.

There have been no allegations made by children living at the home. However, staff do not demonstrate good knowledge of the policies and procedures relating to the management of allegations against senior staff. Staff members do not know how to raise whistle-blowing concerns. This does not help them to keep children safe.

The new staff team has taken learning from previous reported serious incidents and medication storage errors. The registered person has ensured that all staff have been trained in the administration of medication and behaviour management to prepare the staff team for the readmission of children.

There has only been one reported incident of a child going missing from the home. Staff mainly followed their missing-from-home protocol. However, staff did not inform

the parent when a child went missing or when they returned safely. The parent expressed anxiety about this incident and stated that had they been informed, they would have supported the child's safe return.

The physical environment is safe. The home has been redecorated and is clean, tidy and homely. Staff recruitment is safe.

Leaders and managers

The home began readmitting children in September 2020. Since March 2020, the home was designated as a COVID-19 hub with the potential to be used to allow children to self-isolate safely. The home was overseen by the registered provider between September 2020 and October 2020. An interim manager was employed in October 2020. The registered manager's post has been vacant since April 2020.

Leaders, managers and staff are positive about their roles and their team. All staff are passionate about providing nurture and good-quality care for children at the home. The members of the staff team are mostly permanent, and the home has one vacancy which they are currently recruiting to.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff receive regular supervision. Staff say they benefit from formal supervision, group supervision and relevant training. Staff enjoy a culture of learning from each other and they feel supported by leaders and managers.

Leaders and managers use learning effectively from internal and external monitoring to improve the service. Leaders and managers are in the process of supporting a new staff team to understand and embed a therapeutic model of care. Therefore, one requirement from the previous inspection is not fully met.

Positive partnerships are in place with professionals. One professional said, 'The staff really care and have focused on building relationships and improving boundaries.' However, staff are unclear about current arrangements for communicating effectively with parents. This requires further clarification with the local authority in respect of individual care planning.

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—	10 March 2021

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— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(iv)) In order to meet this regulation, the therapeutic model of care described in the home's statement of purpose must be firmly embedded in care practice in order to help children reach their full potential and to enhance their experience of care.	
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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)) In particular, ensure that staff understand whistle-blowing procedures and know what action to take in the event of a child making an allegation against a senior member of the staff team.	10 March 2021
A person may only manage a children's home if— the person is of integrity and good character;	10 March 2021

having regard to the size of the home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children—

the person has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills to manage the home effectively and lead the care of children; and

the person is physically and mentally fit to manage the home; and

full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the person in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.

For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b)(i), a person has the appropriate experience and qualification if the person has—

within the last 5 years, worked for at least 2 years in a position relevant to the residential care of children;

worked for at least one year in a role requiring the supervision and management of staff working in a care role; and

by the relevant date, attained—

the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 5 Diploma"); or

a qualification which the registered provider considers to be equivalent to the Level 5 Diploma.

The relevant date is—

in the case of a person who starts managing a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 3 years after the date on which that person started managing a home; or

in the case of a person who was managing a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2017.

The registered provider may defer the relevant date if the person—

does not manage, or has not managed, a home for a prolonged period; or

manages, or has managed, a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 28 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(c) (2)(a)(b)(c)(i)(ii) (3)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b))	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they and their staff engage proactively with the placing authority to contribute fully to the relevant plans for the child's care on an ongoing basis. This relates specifically to ensuring that the registered person and staff review plans for communicating with parents on an ongoing basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 5, paragraph 11.3)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and 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 the child. This relates to night staff's reflective diaries, which are not completed fully and do not detail work conducted with children to improve sleep routines. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that records are kept which detail all individual incidents when children go missing from the home (regulation 36, schedule 3 (14)). This information should be shared with the placing authority and, where appropriate, with the child's parents. In particular, this refers to informing parents, where appropriate, when a child goes missing and returns following an episode of being missing from care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.31)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC473460

Registered provider: Kattz (AH) Limited

Registered provider address: 51 Station Road, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 3BQ

Responsible individual: Kofoworola Ibitoye

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jayshree Pillay, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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