

SC486167

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a national provider of children's homes. It provides care for one young person who may have some emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The post of registered manager has been vacant since 03 July 2020. A manager has been in post since 10 July 2020.

Visit dates: 28 to 29 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 30 April 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

The young person moved to this home in July 2020 from another home operated by this provider. The manager moved with the young person from the other home, providing some consistency of care. Meaningful relationships between the manager and young person are strengthened through close working with the young person's family.

Some difficulties with behaviour and criminal activity have led to intervention by social care professionals. The young person has responded well to the support provided and is working towards a plan for his future in line with his wishes. Social care professionals report that the young person is well cared for at this home and they welcome the effective communication between the manager and themselves.

The young person is supported to become more independent in life skills such as cooking, cleaning and laundry. Through staff and family encouragement, the young person is improving his physical health through regular attendance at a gym and a decision to cease smoking.

The young person has secured an apprenticeship in plumbing at a local college. During the lockdown period, a tutor provided support to sit GCSEs resulting in passes in English and Maths. Support continued to produce a curriculum vitae and apply for apprenticeships.

The home has benefitted from new carpets and redecoration, however, the bathroom requires attention to ensure it is decorated to the same standard as the rest of the house.

The safety of children

Safeguarding concerns are managed and documented well. Social care professionals report that the young person is safe at this home. Staff have a good understanding of the risks that the young person can be exposed to when away from the home. Risk assessments are recorded in more than one place and are not always updated throughout.

The manager is effective in partnership working for the safety of young people. Regular risk management meetings co-ordinate clear strategies to be followed to reduce risks of harm. The manager seeks guidance from specialist advisors within the organisation. This collaborative approach has informed risk management documents and care practices. The young person recognises the support and guidance provided and as a result there has been no significant concerns for the past two months.

Prior to July 2020, another young person lived at this home with persistent incidents of going missing. Leaders and managers recognised that the home could no longer meet this young person's needs and alternative accommodation was found.

Effective management of the risk of infection posed by COVID-19 has ensured that, to date, no-one in the home has had any symptoms or been tested positive. Hand gel and face masks by the front door contribute towards a virus-free environment. Young people follow the advice and wear a face covering when required out of the home.

Leaders and managers

In May 2020 this home was acquired by a national provider of children's homes. There are improved monitoring systems providing good oversight of the quality of care practices and any safeguarding incidents.

The provider swiftly appointed another manager following the resignation of the registered manager. This manager is in the process of applying to Ofsted. She is very proactive in her pursuit of the development of the home and demonstrated her efficiency during this assurance visit.

The staff team is new to this home, meaning it is only the manager that has cared for the young person for a reasonable length of time. Staff report that they are building relationships with the young person and supporting him with his care plan to move on from this home.

Social care professionals report very positively about the manager, saying she is 'a robust and confident manager who knows the young person well'. Staff members say they receive good support from the manager through supervision and training.

The requirement and recommendation made at the last inspection are met. One recommendation is made following this visit.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Staff should continually and actively assess risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards' page 42, paragraph 9.5)

In particular, ensure that risk assessment documents are up to date with the inclusion of relevant information stored in other documents.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC486167

Registered provider: South West Childcare Services

Registered provider address: Maybrook House, Second Floor, Queensway,
Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Guy Mammatt

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Clare Davies, Social Care Inspector
Michelle Oxley, Social Care Inspector

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