

2539587

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight children and young people who have emotional and social difficulties. The home is privately owned.

The home was registered on 4 September 2019, and the manager has been registered since March 2020.

Visit dates: 1 to 2 September 2020

Previous inspection date: not previously inspected

Previous inspection judgement: not previously inspected

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 no serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

The children and young people have benefited from attending the on-site school and have continued to make progress in their education. Three of the young people took and passed school qualifications. This has given one young person the chance to enrol on the college course of his choice. He is motivated and has plans for his future.

Staff have supported children and young people to develop life skills through a range of training sessions. These include self-care skills, independent living skills and information on how to keep safe.

The children and young people have spent more time at home, and this has resulted in improved relationships with staff and among the peer group. Staff have kept children and young people active and busy, and this has prevented boredom during times of lockdown.

Photographs and art work at the home show how the staff have been creative in engaging the children and young people in a range of activities. The staff have helped to educate the children about issues and topics that affect their lives. This involved staff exploring and challenging the children's and young people's beliefs and values, such as about relationships and racism.

The staff have helped the children and young people to understand the COVID-19 pandemic. Further support is provided by the onsite therapist, who monitors the impact on the children's and young people's emotional health. This helps to stop any anxieties and has been important at a time when external mental health teams have reduced their services.

The staff have been proactive in making sure that children and young people still see their family, using video calling when face-to-face visits were restricted due to the pandemic. Normal family time has now resumed.

The safety of children

The children and young people learn how to keep themselves safe through the many key working sessions, one-to-one discussions with the therapist and staff, and group house meetings. A plethora of topics are discussed, such as drug misuse and child exploitation. The children and young people have trusting relationships with staff and can openly discuss sensitive issues about their sexual and emotional health. The staff support the children and young people to get timely medical and health advice.

The staff team follows the guidance about how to keep safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. The children and young people are taught about social distancing and good hygiene. There have been no incidents of any children, young people or staff catching the infection.

Some children and young people have occasionally gone missing. The staff make every effort to locate the children and young people, so they are returned safely. The manager requests a meeting with the professionals involved, including the police, and this results in a multi-agency risk management plan. This helps to keep the children and young people safe in the community.

Staff understand the effect on children's and young people's behaviour of being confined indoors during lockdown. There have been some incidents of challenging behaviour that have occurred. Staff have dealt with these effectively with very limited police intervention. The manager has received complaints from some neighbours about the noise made by the children and young people. The manager is proactive in working with others, such as the anti-social behaviour worker, to repair relationships and support a harmonious environment.

Staff have continued to develop their skills and knowledge through good access to training. This includes safeguarding children.

Leaders and managers

The manager has a wealth of experience and has been the registered manager of this home since March 2020. She has the support of two deputy managers, and the staff benefit from strong leadership and support.

The home's computerised system is intuitive and allows easy, off-site access by the manager when she is away from the home. This ensures that there is constant managerial oversight. The system supports easy access to statistical information and monitoring of children's and young people's behaviours. This allows staff to be aware of any changes in behaviour and the appropriate measures to be implemented.

The manager and senior staff ensure that all children's and young people's plans are constantly reviewed, taking into consideration the COVID-19 outbreak and the easing of restrictions. Staff clearly understand these plans and implement them appropriately.

The independent visitor continues to monitor the progress and well-being of the children and young people. Visits were carried out virtually to speak to the children and young people and staff. On-site visits are now being undertaken again.

The manager regularly consults the children and young people and stakeholders. This feedback is used to improve the care and experiences provided for children and young people. For example, house meetings are now well attended due to the changes made following the children's and young people's suggestions.

The staff feel valued and respected by their senior leaders. The staff team's efforts during the pandemic were rewarded by financial incentives. This helps keep the manager and staff team motivated and committed to providing the best consistent care for the children and young people. The safely vetted core staff work well together and provide children and young people with stability and continuity. The children and young people feel safe and can speak to any of the staff if they have any concerns.

The recommendations made at the last inspection have been met in that the impact risk assessments are more detailed, and careful consideration is given to the timing of new children and young people moving into the home.

No requirements or recommendations are made following this visit.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2539587

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: Mountfields House, Epinal Way, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3GE

Responsible individual: Jessica Middleton

Registered manager: Frances Russell

Inspectors

Tina Ruffles, Social Care Inspector

Rachel Ruth, Social Care Inspector (Shadow inspector)



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