

2528516

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to six girls who have been subject to, or are at risk of, child exploitation. The home provides a compulsory therapeutic programme.

The registered manager left in May 2020. There is an acting manager in post who is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Visit dates: 7 to 8 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 5 November 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be 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 identified no serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children benefit from high-quality care and support that have helped them turn their lives around. The staff work with each child to understand their past experiences and how this has shaped the behaviours that place them at risk of harm.

A structured therapeutic programme is delivered by a full-time psychologist. The psychologist provides a behavioural lead, guiding the staff in a holistic and nurturing approach, due to which the children absolutely thrive.

Most of the children live a considerable distance from their family homes. Seeing their families is extremely important to them and requires forward planning. The manager is tenacious and persistent in making sure that these arrangements are made by the children's social workers and reflect the initial care plan.

The children all attend their education. This gives them a good routine, builds their knowledge and extends their peer groups. The staff work closely with teachers to identify when the children need help, and they support them with their reading and homework.

The children are upbeat, polite and reflective. They recognise the progress that they have made. Despite their initial fears about the distance from their family homes, they feel secure and positive about their lives and future plans. They can see the difference that living at the home and engaging in a therapeutic programme have made.

The children benefit from living in a small rural community. The house is light and spacious with tastefully decorated communal areas and cosy personalised bedrooms. The rear garden has raised vegetable beds and play equipment. However, the grass and patio are unkempt and a fence panel needs repair.

The safety of children

The children are helped to reflect on the level of risks that led to their residential placements. They are supported to understand their vulnerabilities and past experiences. The therapeutic model and group work build the children's self-confidence. The staff support and the therapeutic input help the children to change their lives and work towards making informed decisions about their personal safety.

The staff are guided carefully in the delivery of behaviour management techniques. They implement a planned therapeutic approach that looks beyond incidents, identifies triggers and prevents recurrence. This has been highly successful and

significantly reduced the number of incidents. The group of children is amicable and the children are supportive of one another. They demonstrate maturity and insight as they work through the difficulties of communal living. For those children who have high levels of anxiety and few social skills, this is enormous progress.

There are very few incidents of children leaving the home without agreement, minimal use of physical intervention and no complaints. Overall, the atmosphere is settled. This provides the children with stability.

Leaders and managers

The new manager has made a significant difference to the children's care. Improvement is evident in many areas. Since the manager's appointment, the admission decisions have been measured and realistic and fully support the therapeutic ethos of the home.

The children, the staff, social workers and other professionals recognise the progress that the children have made and the positive impact of the new manager. The manager places the children's individual needs at the centre of her practice and leads the staff team well. The manager reads and reviews each incident record. The records show managerial oversight and they include enough detail and the children's comments. The manager holds debriefs and discussions with the staff to help them learn from incidents and consider their decisions.

The staff team receives regular support and supervision. However, the supervision records for some staff fail to demonstrate how practice issues have been fully explored or how the staff will reflect on, and consider, their learning moving forward.

The manager has addressed the previous requirements and recommendation. She has dealt with allegations appropriately, which addresses a specific shortfall identified at the last inspection. However, the staff have not reported a practice issue promptly, or consistently followed the organisation's safe care policy. The children have, on occasion, experienced unhelpful responses, poor role models and inconsistent boundaries from a minority of the staff.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	25/09/2020

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—that staff—</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(vii))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities to report practice concerns promptly and that they follow the home’s safe caring practice and safeguarding policies.</p>	
---	--

Recommendations

- Provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
In particular, ensure that the garden is maintained and the fence is repaired.
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.2)

Children’s home details

Unique reference number: 2528516

Registered provider: Compass Children’s Homes Limited

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

Responsible individual: Sonata Brisley

Registered manager: Ellese Hammond

Inspectors

Deirdra Keating, Social Care Inspector
Leemya McKeown, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020