

1234166

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to three children. The home's statement of purpose states that the home provides care for children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Visit dates:** 8 to 9 September 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 8 May 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 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**

Staff know their children well. They understand the needs of the children and have a strong focus on relationship building. This has helped reduce children's feelings of isolation and levels of anxiety during the lockdown period and continued social distancing.

Staff have made attempts to include parents in all aspects of their children's care. During lockdown, family time was actively encouraged through the use of technology. Face-to-face contact also took place, and outdoor spaces were used to ensure social distancing.

Children have enjoyed a range of indoor and outdoor activities during recent months, for example Great British Bake-Off competition, board games, chess, movie nights, trips to the beach, bowling and go-karting.

Children's social, physical, emotional and mental health needs are met well. Children receive excellent support with their complex medical needs. Children have benefited from therapeutic input throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, through virtual methods during lockdown, and face-to-face meetings while social distancing.

Staff hold regular keywork sessions with children. These are specific to the needs of the child, and to what is important to them. Staff also plan and engage children in keywork sessions, in line with emerging risks, behaviours and need.

### **The safety of children**

Although there is a high level of incidents of children going missing from the home, staff do all they can to keep children safe. There is good evidence of Return Home Interviews being completed, and of staff safeguarding children while in the community and providing support to children around sexual health matters.

The high levels of incidents of children going missing created an additional risk for staff and children. Managers and staff worked consistently to balance the safeguarding of all children and staff by exercising safety measures related to COVID-19. Children are provided with a 'keep safe' pack, which includes wipes, masks and antibacterial hand gel, for any time spent outside the home.

Staff manage effectively the multiple complex risks that impact on the safety of children. These include life-threatening medical conditions, self-harm and suicidal thoughts, violence and aggression, substance misuse, as well as trauma and anxiety.

Staff have ensured that children have regularly been updated on changing rules about keeping safe during the pandemic. Where the suspension of face-to-face family time impacted on children's mental health, staff encouraged children to make use of virtual methods to see family members. Children were also helped to manage their levels of anxiety safely.

## **Leaders and managers**

The registered manager has been in post since July 2019, and the core team has remained stable. The registered manager's therapeutic skills were particularly beneficial to staff and children during the period of lockdown.

Staff spoke highly of the support that they received from leaders and managers. Managers are invested in keeping children safe. They regularly reassure children that staff are travelling to and from work in a safe way and are adhering to guidance to keep themselves and the children safe.

Leaders and managers place the well-being of individual children in the home at the centre of practice. Managers and leaders focus specific attention on promoting good mental health for children. There are positive partnerships with key professionals, such as the police and specialist nurses.

Leaders, managers and staff promote equality and diversity and encourage discussion about COVID-19. Children have benefited from exploration of views and opinions relating to the Black Lives Matter movement. House meetings took place to raise awareness of Black role models who have made positive contributions to the world.

Managers and leaders supported staff to continue to receive online training during lockdown. Training was specific to current issues and to the needs of the children. For example, some of the training included courses on racism, discrimination and intolerance in children's homes, therapeutic care for children, adverse childhood experiences, and medication. Staff continue to receive regular and reflective supervision.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Staff should be 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. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4) This relates to fully recording the outcomes and learning from complaints, and clearly recording behaviour that leads to the use of restraints.



## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1234166

**Registered provider:** Jamores Limited

**Registered provider address:** 2 Thames Innovation Centre, Studio 52, Veridion Way, Erith DA18 4AL

**Responsible individual:** James Adebayo

**Registered manager:** Silky Kumar

## Inspector

Jayshree Pillay, Social Care Inspector

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