

1254745

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to accommodate five children with social and emotional difficulties. The home is owned by a private organisation which runs a number of other children's homes.

The registered manager has recently left her post.

Visit dates: 7 to 8 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 28 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 identified the following serious concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit:

- Members of staff do not always follow safeguarding procedures. As a result, children have been placed at risk of harm.
- The provider's response to previously identified shortfalls in staff safeguarding practice has not been effective. Safeguarding practice remains weak.
- There is poor communication from staff to some professionals and parents.
- Lack of effective information sharing within the staff team means that not all staff follow children's care plans.
- The home is not monitored effectively. Leaders do not have a good enough grasp of the weaknesses and the areas of development for the home.
- Children are not always supervised effectively when accessing the internet.

The care of children

Overall, children generally receive good care. The home benefits from a stable staff team that provides some consistency for children. Children say that they enjoy spending time with the adults who care for them. Children know who they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns.

Staff worked hard during the lockdown period to keep children occupied and engaged with education-based activities. Children embraced the opportunity to work towards a nationally recognised award. Most children have education placements. One child's education plans are not yet clear, despite a new term starting. The provider has escalated their concerns to make sure that the child's education arrangements are only disrupted for the shortest amount of time.

Children are supported to stay in contact with people who are significant to them. However, ineffective communication within the staff team means that contact arrangements are not always carried out in accordance with children's care plans.

Children receive support to meet and understand their individual health care needs. This includes specialist health care support and services. Staff have a good understanding of children's health needs.

The safety of children

Children are not always safe. A lack of adult supervision puts children at risk. A recent safeguarding concern was not managed effectively. In addition, staff did not follow safeguarding procedures properly. This led to a delay in the relevant authorities being informed.

During the visit, a further safeguarding concern was identified relating to staff not following the missing-from-home protocol when a child went missing. The child was put at more risk through staff inaction. The records relating to this incident are vague. There has been no independent return-home interview or management monitoring of the event.

The provider's response to previous safeguarding incidents has not always been effective in securing improvements. After an incident in March 2020, the provider identified shortfalls in staff knowledge and understanding of safeguarding processes. Additional training was provided. This training has not been effective, as there remains a lack of shared understanding about the procedure for reporting allegations.

Risks relating to online safety are not well managed. Staff do not fully understand how to keep children safe online. There is not an effective system in place to ensure that children are safe when accessing gaming platforms, for example, where they could have contact with people who are not known to them.

The staff team works well in partnership with the police. This was identified as a significant shortfall at the previous inspection. Staff encourage children to develop a positive view of the police. Children's behaviour is generally well managed and there are few incidents of challenging behaviour. The use of physical intervention and sanctions has decreased, which also indicates the success of staff intervention.

Leaders and managers

There is significant improvement in the functioning of the home since the last inspection. However, shortfalls identified at this visit demonstrate that leaders and managers are not exercising effective leadership.

The registered manager has very recently left her post. A new manager has been identified and is preparing to submit their application to register with Ofsted. The new manager will be supported by a new deputy manager. They are eager to make improvements to the home.

Issues with communication have been raised by professionals and parents. Feedback from social workers is mixed, with the majority stating that communication from staff is poor. However, positive feedback was also received. One social worker said, 'They did a great job given [the child's] complexities.'

The responsible individual acknowledges the concerns identified at this visit and is considering a thorough review of the culture of the home to make sure that there is improvement. All but two of the requirements made at the last inspection are met. Two requirements are repeated.

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
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies;</p> <p>that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b))</p>	<p>30/10/2020</p>
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose;</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each</p>	<p>30/10/2020</p>

child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(f)(h))

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1254745

Registered provider: Homes2Inspire

Registered provider address: Suite 3h, Valiant Office Suites, Valley Drive, Swift Valley Industrial Estate, Rugby CV21 1TQ

Responsible individual: Kelly Gliszczynski

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspector

Catherine Honey, Social Care Inspector

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