

1216505

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children and/or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2 December 2019.

Visit dates: 22 to 23 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 28 January 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Improved effectiveness

Information about this visit

Due to coronavirus COVID-19, 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

Children enjoy trusting relationships with staff and say that they are happy living in the home. Staff engage in conversation with children informally and in planned one-to-one discussions, on a range of subjects. As a result, children are able to express their views and are listened to.

Children continue to spend time with their families. Staff help to support this by providing transport to and from the family home. Where appropriate, staff encourage and support children to travel independently. This enables children to develop confidence and a sense of responsibility, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff encourage and support children to attend school. During the COVID-19 lockdown, staff liaised with teachers to ensure that children had the appropriate resources to continue their education in the home. Staff also challenge educational professionals, where necessary, to ensure children have the right to attend a school of their choice. As a result, children feel supported, cared for and have opportunities to learn.

Children are offered and engage in a range of activities linked to their interests and personal preferences. Staff used other opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. For example, coastal walks for exercise and nights in watching DVDs together.

The safety of children

Staff have a good understanding of risk and behaviour management. Children's risk assessments are individualised and regularly reviewed and updated by staff.

Bullying has taken place in the home. Staff address this issue with relevant children in one-to-one sessions. Additionally, staff help children to access online training to educate them on all aspects of bullying and its effects.

Some members of staff have not been trained in the de-escalation and physical intervention model used by the provider. Access to the training has been restricted due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Alternative methods of facilitating this training have not been identified. This could lead to children being at risk.

Leaders and managers

The manager is dedicated to improving outcomes for children. Since her appointment, she has continued to make improvements and act as a good role model to children and staff.

The manager has good relationships with the children. Professionals spoken to during the visit held her in high regard. They also commented on the good progress and support children receive during their time at the home.

The manager provides staff with regular supervision and directly observes their practice. However, there are no opportunities to evaluate the reasons behind children's behaviours or their effect on staff. This limits the learning and development of staff.

The manager has ensured that the home, internally and externally, has benefited from a refurbishment and is now decorated to a good standard throughout.

The requirements and recommendations at last inspection have been met.

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

Recommendations

- Staff supervision must enable staff to reflect and act on how their own feelings and behaviour may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards,' page 39, paragraph 8.11)
- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that all their staff have been adequately trained in the principles of restraint and any restraint techniques appropriate to the needs of the children the home is set up to care for as defined in the home's statement of purpose. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards,' page 49, paragraph 9.57)

In particular, staff should have access to training other than face-to-face during the COVID-19 pandemic, to support their understanding of restraint techniques.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1216505

Registered provider: Hennessy Living Group Limited

Registered provider address: Rickleton 1B, Bowes Offices, Lambton Park,
Chester Le Street DH3 4AN

Responsible individual: Christopher Goundry

Registered manager: Margaret Jameson

Inspector

Michael Dack, Social Care Inspector

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