

1271581

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children or young people. The home specialises in caring for children and young people who may have learning disabilities, complex needs or mental ill-health.

There is a registered manager at this home.

The provider is also registered with the Care Quality Commission to provide treatment of disease, disorder or injury.

**Visit dates:** 5 to 6 October 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 13 February 2019

**Previous inspection judgement:** sustained effectiveness

## 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**

The same young people have remained living in the home for a number of years. This stability has enabled trusting relationships to develop with young people. One young person said, 'I would not be where I am now if it was not for the staff helping and believing in me.' The young people receive nurturing and supportive care from a committed staff team. The staff know each young person's needs and strive to give them the best opportunities in life.

Young people receive significant levels of support from an in-house multi-disciplinary team that includes medical, therapy and care staff. Young people's needs are highly complex, and their care and treatment plans are comprehensive and reflect their fluctuating mental health needs.

Young people have made real progress from their individual starting points in all aspects of their development, including in personal relationships, managing emotions and developing independence skills. A young person has successfully stopped smoking cigarettes. Another young person has excelled in education and achieved all the necessary GCSE grades to gain a place in mainstream college. This is a huge achievement and something that the young person and staff are very proud of.

Consultation meetings are regularly completed to gain young people's views and opinions. However, these do not capture young people's views about the care and support they receive from staff. Also, when young people have put forward an idea, the records do not demonstrate that the idea has been considered and responded to. This can hamper young people's confidence in the process. During discussion with the inspector, a young person made a new suggestion which was taken forward by the registered manager to the senior management team for consideration.

Young people continue to keep in touch with their families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff are creative during lockdown periods, using technology and outdoor face-to-face contact. This helps to maintain these important relationships for young people. Staff continue to invent games, competitions and activities to keep young people entertained and enjoying day-to-day life.

### **The safety of children**

Staff respond well to critical incidents that arise and work effectively with all professionals in the best interests of young people. Incidents are reported promptly to the regulator. A serious incident has led to a court-directed restriction on a young person's liberty. This is continually reviewed and deemed essential in keeping the young person safe.

Risk assessment and management plans are comprehensive and unique to the specific risks to each young person. Detailed control measures support the staff to help young people manage risks and enable staff to provide safer care. These measures are reviewed weekly with the in-house multi-disciplinary mental health team to check that they are effective.

The use of physical intervention is minimal and proportionate. When it is required, documents demonstrate that action is taken to prevent harm to the young person. Incidents and interventions are appropriately reviewed by the manager.

The staff have access to the mental health nurses 24 hours a day for advice and guidance. This provides further safeguards in managing the complex mental health needs of young people living here.

### **Leaders and managers**

The registered manager is suitably qualified and has a wealth of experience in working with young people in residential care. She is passionate and committed to achieving the very best outcomes for young people. The manager promotes a nurturing environment.

Relationships with young people's families and professionals are effective. All stakeholders contacted were highly complementary about the staff, the communication with them and the progress that young people make. A social worker said, 'I cannot fault them. He [the young person] continues to progress, and the staff do not give up; they have stickability.' During local lockdown restrictions, all meetings and communications continue via video link and telephone.

External independent monitoring continues to review the welfare of young people to drive improvements. A development plan is in place to improve the standard of care provided. Management audits are regularly undertaken and provide an overview of care practice. The manager continues to review young people's care plans, carefully considering the COVID-19 outbreak and the changing restrictions. Staff clearly understand these plans and implement them appropriately.

The staff are all suitably qualified or working towards a recognised qualification. They have reflective supervision, team meetings and training. This helps to ensure that care practice meets the standards expected in the home's statement of purpose. In addition, there are in-house healthcare professionals who regularly support young people. They are supervised separately by a clinical lead professional.

The manager has addressed the requirements made at the last inspection to improve care practice. Medication training is more in-depth to support staff's understanding. Records have been streamlined and the manager has completed an evaluative review of the quality of care.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

## **Children's home details**

**Unique reference number:** 1271581

**Registered provider:** Nestlings Care Limited

**Registered provider address:** Suite 4, 1 Derby Street, Leigh, Lancashire WN7 4PF

**Responsible individual:** Anthony Thompson

**Registered manager:** Joanne McCarthy

### **Inspector**

Caroline Jones, Social Care Inspector

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