

1234317

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home offers short- to medium-term placements for a mixed group of young people aged from 11 to 17 years. The young people may have experienced trauma and exploitation, and may also have emotional, social and/or behavioural difficulties.

Visit dates: 2 to 3 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 3 February 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Inadequate

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

Young people who live in this home have positive relationships with staff. Both young people spoken to said that, 'Staff are the best thing about being at the home.'

Young people have specialist support in place. The clinical team offers weekly therapy sessions. Although young people do not always take part in these sessions, the clinical team also offers advice to staff in order to help care for the young people.

Young people take part in a variety of activities. The home is spacious and well equipped to provide a positive living experience. Consistent boundaries between staff and young people are maintained alongside high levels of supervision of young people. As a result, day-to-day living is well structured.

The home is well decorated. However, some minor repairs and upkeep are needed.

Young people have remained in contact with their families throughout lockdown. Presently, young people are able to make calls to family members. Their calls are supervised by staff, which is part of the home's risk assessment to keep young people safe.

Education is well promoted. Young people were supported to complete school work at home during the lockdown period. One young person, who struggled to attend school before lockdown, has been supported by staff to complete the work provided. As a result, this young person's learning has improved.

The safety of children

Some risk assessments are missing, and those in place lack detail on how to respond to behaviours. In particular, the risk assessments do not provide detail on how to respond to challenging behaviour and the use of knives or other weapons. This means that staff are not fully equipped with the information they need to better protect the young people.

Risk assessments are not routinely updated after an incident occurs. The behavioural risk assessments are generic and do not identify the risks to which both young people and staff are exposed.

The impact of COVID-19 has limited the training available to staff, in particular training about exploitation. The manager has not yet been able to mitigate against this shortfall. As a result, some staff do not have the skills to identify risks for the young people.

Although some young people have very challenging and difficult behaviour, physical intervention in the home is rarely used. The staff have good relationships with young people and are effective in de-escalating and defusing incidents in the home. When

physical intervention is used, the incident is managed well, and work is undertaken with young people to look at how this can be avoided in the future.

Incidents of young people going missing from home are managed well, and staff follow multi-agency guidance to support the young person's safe return. Clear records are maintained, and therefore the reader has a good insight into any particular incident. This helps inform practice and reduces the likelihood of reoccurrence.

Allegations are handled quickly and effectively, and appropriate action is taken to ensure that young people are better protected.

Leaders and managers

A new manager has been leading the home since May 2020. The manager has provided clear direction and support to the staff team.

The manager is enthusiastic and puts the young people at the centre of his decision-making. Staff share the manager's enthusiasm, which is a result of the positive influence that the manager has on his team.

Staff are regularly supervised. However, appraisals for established staff members are not complete. This hinders the manager's ability to undertake a full review of professional practice in order to ensure that staff remain effective in their roles.

The new staff members induction was adapted due to the impact of COVID-19. New staff report feeling supported by the manager and senior team. The team is working together well. However, the ethos of the home's 'wellbeing for life' model is not yet embedded. The manager is aware that this is an area for ongoing development, and plans are in place to address this.

The manager communicates regularly with professionals, and feedback is positive about the care that young people receive in the home. However, on at least one occasion, the manager did not adequately challenge the local authority about an instance of poor practice when needed. As a result, key information about the safety of a young person was not shared with the staff team.

The home employs enough staff to meet the needs of the young people. Staff work together well, and the core members of the team have remained the same throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, young people benefit from consistent care from staff they know well and trust.

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>Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met</p> <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>If the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(c))</p> <p>In particular, the manager appropriately challenges professionals when there are identified shortfalls in planning.</p>	25/09/2020
<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—</p> <p>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>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. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that risk assessments are completed on all known risks relevant to the safe care of young people,</p>	25/09/2020

and ensure that staff access training in the issues surrounding child exploitation.	
<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</p> <p>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. (Regulation 13(2)(a))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the home's approach and ethos are embedded within the staff team.</p>	25/09/2020
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure all staff have had an appraisal of their performance conducted and recorded.</p>	25/09/2020

Recommendations

- Homes must also meet children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

This particularly refers to ensuring that the decor of the home is kept to a high standard, with any minor repairs being completed in a timely manner.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1234317

Registered provider: Care 4 Children Residential Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Care 4 Children, 1 Stuart Road, Bredbury Park Industrial Estate, Bredbury, Stockport SK6 2SR

Responsible individual: Amy Moulton

Registered manager: Tayub Ahmed

Inspectors

Aaron Mcloughlin, Social Care Inspector

Debra Boldy, Social Care Inspector

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