

1240883

# 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 three children or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural problems.

The manager was registered in July 2020.

**Visit dates:** 23 to 24 September 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 20 August 2019

**Previous inspection judgement:** 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**

Young people feel they are offered support in many areas of their lives and that staff listen to their views and opinions. For example, in line with one young person's wishes, alternative training and education is being explored to enable him to benefit from post-16 training opportunities.

Young people's contact with their families is promoted by staff. During the period of lockdown, young people benefited from contact with their families using telephone and online video calls. The staff assist young people to understand the plans relating to the contact they have with their families which have been formulated by the local authority, especially when those plans conflict with the views of the young people.

Young people's backgrounds and previous life experiences are understood by the staff and this understanding is guided by input from the home's psychologist. Young people engage well with the therapeutic support that is offered. Through this input, they learn to regulate their emotions and begin to recognise situations that pose a risk to their safety.

Young people understand how to make a complaint should they need to. They feel they are regularly consulted and their views are understood and acted on by the staff. They are offered appropriate choices in menus, activities and decor of their rooms. One young person, commenting on the staff, said: 'Staff are all good to us; they show us respect.'

Decisions about an admission which was based on incomplete information resulted in poor matching and an unsettling placement. Consequently, one young person who was admitted, and has since been discharged, disrupted the progress that another young person was making.

It has been the practice of staff to lock the living room as part of the bedtime routine. This restriction prevents young people from accessing all parts of their home. The restriction has not been risk assessed or reviewed. There is no clear justification for parts of the home to be locked, which restricts young people's liberty.

## **The safety of children**

Young people say they feel safe at the home. They comment: 'I can talk to staff and if everything isn't alright I can let them know and they listen.' And, 'If I'm upset about anything, they spend time with me.'

Young people benefit from care that addresses their previous trauma and life experiences. They engage with the therapeutic support that is offered on a weekly basis and over time they learn to recognise the risks that are present in certain behaviours and activities.

There have been incidents of missing from home. The staff were active in trying to locate the young people and return them home. Staff follow the plans and protocols devised for when young people go missing from home. There has been a recent drop in the number of incidents of going missing from home following the discharge of one young person. The effects of this young person's behaviour on other residents was quickly recognised by the manager and acted on.

Incidents have taken place that required notification. Overall, challenging situations involving young people are responded to effectively by the staff. Incidents of substance misuse in the home have resulted in referrals to specialist teams and consultation with the local police to determine the source. Poor supervision of young people resulted in another young person entering the home without the knowledge of staff. Young people were placed at risk because the staff on duty at the time of this incident were unqualified and new to the home. The staff did not have the support of an experienced or qualified co-worker on shift.

The response to some incidents has not been effective in providing a safer environment for young people. When incidents have occurred, clear managerial advice and instruction to prevent reoccurrence has not been given. This means that opportunities to share strategies with staff to reduce risks were not taken, for example, developing written instructions to share with staff or learning being disseminated to staff during team meetings. This lack of oversight led to missed opportunities to enhance the quality of care for young people.

### **Leaders and managers**

Over the reporting period, there have been a number of staff changes. The manager is aware of the effect this has had on stability and continuity of care for young people.

Although two young people were discharged on a planned basis in line with their care plans, not all young people have benefited from such planning. The manager is aware of the shortfalls in having admitted one young person without the necessary information to ensure their needs could be met. As a result, compatibility and the effect on young people were not thoroughly considered, leading to a poor experience for both young people.

Staff receive support via supervision and regular team meetings where the progress and work with young people is regularly reviewed. A recommendation made at the previous inspection in relation to team meetings has been met.

Allegations and complaints have been addressed in a timely manner by the manager and this included liaison with relevant agencies.

Professionals report that there are suitable arrangements in place for the sharing of information and that both the manager and staff are knowledgeable about young people and their plans.

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving on or moving on from the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all information is available prior to making a decision to admit a new child or young person.</p>	31/10/2020
<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>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))</p>	31/10/2020
<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 their full potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>	31/10/2020

<p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; and</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide continuity of care for each child.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(2)(c)(d))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.</p> <p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular the independent person's opinion as to whether—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.</p> <p>(Regulation 44 (1)(4)(a)(b))</p>	31/10/2020
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any areas of the home's premises—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe.</p> <p>(Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p>	31/10/2020

## **Children's home details**

**Unique reference number:** 1240883

**Registered provider:** Care 4 Children Holdco Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Stephanie Hewitt

**Registered manager:** Katherine Yarker

## **Inspector**

Pauline Yates, Social Care Inspector

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