

2541440

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

A private company owns this home. The home offers care and accommodation for up to three young people who have experienced childhood instability which has resulted in trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The registered manager has recently resigned from her post. An interim manager is currently in place. The long-term management arrangements have yet to confirmed.

On 2 and 3 July 2020 a monitoring inspection was undertaken. This was completed following concerns shared with Ofsted about young people's safety. The inspection found significant safeguarding failings, which had compromised young people's welfare and safety. Ofsted issued a notice of restriction of accommodation. Additionally, two compliance notices were issued under Regulation 12 (the protection of children standard) and Regulation 14 (the care planning standard).

Ofsted completed a further monitoring inspection on 6 August 2020. The inspection found that good progress had been made in addressing the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection. The two compliance notices were assessed as having been met. The notice of restriction of accommodation remained in place.

Visit dates: 23 to 24 September 2020

Previous inspection date: Not previously inspected

Previous inspection judgement: Not previously inspected

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.

The inspection also evaluated the provider's adherence with the notice restricting accommodation. The inspector found that no further young people have been admitted to the home and therefore the notice has been adhered to.

Following this inspection, Ofsted lifted the notice restricting accommodation.

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

One young person has continued to live in the home since the last inspection. He has strong and trusted relationships with staff. As a result, the young person is increasingly able to discuss his feelings and emotions and has invested in his home.

The young person's views are known and understood by staff. Key-work sessions and day-to-day discussions provide him with opportunities to influence the care he receives. Staff take the young person's requests into account when planning his care. For example, more activities, family time and support have helped him to build his independence skills.

Staff support the young person to spend time with those people who matter most to him. Recently, he has spent regular time with a member of his family in their home. Overall, this has had a positive impact on the young person. However, the interim manager has not fully assessed this arrangement to ensure that all possible risks are explored and managed.

The young person enjoys a range of activities and enjoyable experiences. This includes trips to theme parks, baking and going on walks with staff. Staff plan to support the young person to join a local gym as soon as he is old enough.

The young person has recently refused to attend or engage with his education provision. In addition, he does not engage with staff's efforts to supply education in

the home. Staff and managers continue to work hard to re-engage the young person in education.

Staff support the young person to engage in targeted work with specialist agencies. As a result, incidents when he has gone missing from home have significantly reduced, and the risks associated with possible exploitation are contained and managed well.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a minimal impact on the young person's experiences and quality of care. He has continued to visit his local community and enjoy a range of activities. Staff manage the risks well and provide the young person with adequate support and advice to keep him safe.

The safety of children

Recently completed safeguarding training, which included information about child exploitation, has improved staff's ability to identify and respond to potential signs of risk.

Staff have a good understanding of the young person's vulnerabilities and the potential for him to place himself at risk of harm. For example, they encourage him to go for a walk when he is feeling unsettled. Staff monitor the young person closely in such situations. As a result, he has not gone missing since the last inspection.

Staff provide the young person with targeted support to help him understand the risks he may be exposed to. Regular key-work sessions allow him to explore his behaviour and support him to make positive choices. For example, sessions focus on the risks associated with substance misuse, unhealthy relationships and sexual health.

Staff are increasingly consistent with their approach to managing behaviour. They use rewards and praise to encourage the young person to behave positively. Staff jointly agree consequences with the young person. These boundaries help the young person to feel settled and safe.

Overall, risk assessments are detailed and include clear strategies for staff to manage risk. Despite this, a few assessments are out of date or have information that is no longer relevant. This has the potential to reduce the effectiveness of staff's approach to safeguarding the young person.

Leaders and managers

The interim manager is child centred and passionate about the young people in his care. Staff feel supported by him and are increasingly confident in their roles. They benefit from good-quality supervision and training.

The interim manager continues to develop staff practice and embed learning to improve the quality of care provided. He acknowledges that this is an ongoing process. For example, the quality of information recorded by staff is variable. Furthermore, the manager's monitoring systems are not yet sufficient to enable him to identify and act on shortfalls in staff practice. However, this is an improving picture.

An experienced and knowledgeable responsible individual has recently started in post. This has enhanced the strength of the leadership team and will provide staff with great scrutiny and oversight.

Overall, staff work well with a range of partner agencies. Despite this, the interim manager has not fully escalated his concerns about the delays in the local authority's care planning for the young person. The lack of timely decision-making has caused the young person confusion and distress.

A core team of staff have provided the young person with consistent care throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. They ensure that the home environment is kept safe by following social distancing guidance and through regular use of hand sanitiser.

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>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs;</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.</p> <p>(Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c))</p>	02/11/2020

<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 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>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f)(h))</p>	<p>02/11/2020</p>
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>(Regulation 14 (1)(a))</p> <p>In particular, the manager must ensure that young people's contact arrangements are adequately assessed and reviewed.</p>	<p>02/11/2020</p>
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>are kept up to date.</p> <p>(Regulation 36 (1)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that risk assessments, staff logs and young people's progress reports are clear and up to date.</p>	<p>02/11/2020</p>

Recommendations

- Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. If no

education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge them to meet the child's needs under Regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28 paragraph 5.15)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2541440

Registered provider: Berry Gifford Limited

Registered provider address: Berry Gifford Limited, Suite 2, 2 Mercury park, Amber Close, Tamworth B77 4RP

Responsible individual: Misheck Hakulandaba

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Gareth Leckey, Social Care Inspector

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