

1256658

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for two children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private company.

The registered manager resigned from the home in December 2019. The current manager has yet to submit an application to Ofsted.

Visit dates: 7 to 8 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 6 February 2020

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

Education attendance has been a strength of this home. Children continued to attend school every day during the COVID-19 pandemic. Managers and staff have maintained good links with education providers. They have shared behaviour management strategies with teaching staff to promote and support children's progress.

Children have been supported to keep in touch with their families throughout COVID-19. The manager liaised with a placing social worker to devise a structured contact plan for one child in line with her views, wishes and feelings. Increased and structured family contact has meant that incidents of going missing from home have dramatically reduced as a result of this plan.

One social worker told the inspector that staff and managers have given children new experiences, including supporting and enabling a family holiday, and have gone 'above and beyond' to support children. Children have been supported to have fun and take part in activities such as going for local walks and attending kickboxing training.

Regular direct work has taken place with children to try to help them learn new skills and support their development, with sessions in areas such as self-care, dental hygiene and self-regulation. Direct work has also taken the form of role-play activities that children have said that they enjoyed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on staffing levels, which has meant that children have not always been cared for by staff who know them well. This has led to inconsistencies in practice and incidents escalating.

The safety of children

Not all staff understand how to manage risk and keep children safe. One new member of staff had not read the plans for children before working in the home. They did not have a clear understanding of the current risk strategies in place. Furthermore, not all known risks have been included in relevant plans for children. This means that not all staff are fully aware of the relevant information to support and protect children.

Incidents have not always been managed in line with the strategies included in the plans for children. During one incident, staff did not follow a child's plan during an incident of self-harm. This increased the risk for the child.

Ineffective management of behaviour has led to an escalation and resulted in the police being called to the home and children arrested. This was confirmed by a child's social worker. In addition, records do not always reflect clearly why staff took a particular course of action, which prevents any learning from the incident in relation to whether strategies worked or were effective. Furthermore, management oversight and monitoring have not been robust in identifying shortfalls in the management of risk and challenging behaviour.

Not all incidents that involved a form of physical intervention have had sufficient management oversight to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures used. During one incident, staff who were not trained used physical intervention to hold a child. The manager has failed to evaluate the effectiveness of the holds used. This prevents any learning from the incident and has failed to identify a training need for staff. A requirement has been made to address this shortfall.

Leaders and managers

The home does not have a registered manager. The current manager has managed the home for several months but has not yet applied to Ofsted to register. The regulator has set out to the manager and the provider their duties in ensuring that the manager is registered.

The manager has excellent relationships with children and consults regularly with them, using a variety of methods, to establish their views and how they would like to be cared for.

Professionals spoke highly of the manager. A strength of her practice is sharing information about children with other professionals to improve collaborative working and advocating on behalf of children. A child's teacher said that she applauded this way of working.

The staff team feels supported and benefits from regular supervision. Staff have access to regular training, that has continued during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the manager and senior leaders have facilitated workshops for staff in areas such as managing children's behaviours to try to improve their confidence and knowledge base. Staff told the inspector that they feel that this was useful and beneficial.

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>The positive relationships standard</p> <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour and positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children.</p> <p>(Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)(xi))</p>	<p>16/11/2020</p>
<p>The protection of children standard</p> <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 that staff 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>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p>	<p>16/11/2020</p>

<p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare.</p> <p>(Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi))</p>	
<p>The leadership and management standard</p> <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 helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to 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;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</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)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(h))</p>	<p>16/11/2020</p>
<p>Behaviour management policies and records</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p>	<p>16/11/2020</p>

details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;

the name of the person who used the measure ('the user'), and of any other person present when the measure was used;

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure;

and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person')

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.

(Regulation 35(3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1256658

Registered provider: Lytham Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 400 Longmoor Lane, Fazakerly, Liverpool L9 9DB

Responsible individual: Pamela Constance

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jessica Forshaw, Social Care Inspector

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