

1232658

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a private organisation. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager has been in post since 16 June 2020. She has submitted a notification to voluntarily cancel her registration from 9 October 2020.

Visit dates: 7 to 8 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 19 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

This home provides a nurturing and warm environment for children and young people. It is bright and airy, with photographs of young people and staff on display. Children and young people are encouraged to personalise and take pride in their bedrooms.

Children and young people benefit from positive and trusting relationships with staff who understand them. Staff maintain clear and consistent boundaries which help young people make positive choices.

Social workers and parents say that children and young people are well cared for and they are happy with the care provided. Parents say that the children and young people are now making safer choices and attribute this to the support they receive at the home. Parents value being included by staff in decision-making and are kept informed about their child's care. Emotional health needs are well understood. Children and young people have access to specialist services when needed.

In line with agreed plans, staff help children and young people to keep in touch with people who are important to them. During times of local and national restrictions, children and young people have used technology to enable this contact to be maintained.

Children and young people can talk to staff about things that are important to them and they are able to ask staff for help when needed. Staff consult with, and listen to, children and young people, and staff are quick to respond to concerns that children and young people may raise. There is evidence that staff regularly advocate for children and young people to ensure that their voices are heard and they have access to leisure and educational opportunities and support.

Staff are creative in engaging children and young people to learn life skills and provide practical experiences to develop their learning. Children and young people are given opportunities to grow, develop and work towards reaching their potential. A parent said, 'I can't thank them enough for all they are doing to help [Name of young person] reach their potential.'

The safety of children

Staff understand young people's vulnerabilities and are in tune with the risks they may experience. Up-to-date risk assessments, which include strategies to follow, support staff to provide a safer environment for children and young people. Staff are often able to divert children and young people from episodes of going missing from home and self-harming behaviours. As a result, there has been a reduction in the

number of incidents. Staff use strategies effectively to calm children and young people and the use of restraints and sanctions is low.

Staff offer focused, individualised time with children and young people, providing space for them to focus on making safer choices and identify what is important to them. Incidents are well managed as staff proactively work alongside other professionals and family members to respond to incidents and keep children and young people safe. Children's and young people's views are taken into consideration and there is oversight by the management team.

The use of telephones and the internet is monitored by staff in a non-invasive way. Staff understand risks when using social media and speak to children and young people about any concerns. Staff are working with children and young people to reduce their reliance on their mobile phones. The staff recognise and respect that some children and young people use their mobile phone as a tool to communicate difficult conversations.

Leaders and managers

The manager is suitably qualified and has been registered to manage the home since June 2020. She is supported in her role by a deputy manager and service manager. They have introduced several changes to improve the service. These changes have improved staff morale, developed a more consistent approach to caring for children and young people and have created an ethos where staff are passionate about achieving positive outcomes for children and young people. Professionals and parents speak highly of the management team and the depth and breadth of knowledge that the staff have regarding individual children, young people and their plans.

The staff work together to provide consistent support to children and young people. The staff are supported by managers, who provide the team with clear guidance, access to formal and informal supervision, regular team meetings, group supervisions led by the home's clinical psychologist and relevant training. Children and young people benefit from a core staff team which is supported by specific bank staff who know the children and young people well and who understand the home's procedures.

The manager has good oversight of the home. Staff supervisions are regular and reflective with evidence of strategies to improve and develop practice. The manager uses robust monthly reports and regular audits, alongside stakeholder feedback and reports from the independent visitor to evaluate the progress being made and identify areas for development.

The home is undergoing a period of transition as the manager has submitted her voluntary resignation. A new manager has been employed by the organisation and is already working in the home. She is building relationships with children, young people, stakeholders and staff to promote a smooth transition of managerial responsibilities.

The requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection have been met.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1232658

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Mountfields House, Epinal Way, Off Squirrel Way,
Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3GE

Responsible individual: Jessica Middleton

Registered manager: Joanne Birdsall

Inspectors

Caroline Bertram, Social Care Inspector
Pauline Yates, Social Care Inspector

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