

1256452

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This home, which is run by a private organisation, offers therapeutic care for up to five children who may have experienced trauma, neglect or abuse and family or placement breakdowns.

The manager has been in post since February 2020 and is registered with Ofsted.

Visit dates: 21 to 22 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 5 September 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be 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

Five children were living at the home during the time of the national lockdown. Two children were admitted into the home during this time. The home has recently had to adjust to the new government-directed COVID-19 restrictions that came into force when the local area moved into tier 2.

The staff and children worked together to plan activities at the home during the lockdown restrictions. They took advantage of the large garden by constructing a seating area, planting flowers and buying garden equipment such as a large trampoline. The children said that there was plenty for them to do. These activities have helped the children to maintain positive relationships.

The staff have built trusting relationships with the children, who said that the staff spend time listening to and helping them.

Education attendance remained high during the COVID-19 restrictions. This attendance level has remained despite the local area going into tier 2.

When appropriate, children maintained contact with their parents by phone or video calls. When the national restrictions were lifted, some children were able to have face-to-face family meetings, supported by the staff and in accordance with the social distancing rules. Due to the newly imposed restrictions, the staff are working with parents and social workers to support family meetings in accordance with the new guidance.

The safety of children

The staff have worked with children to help them to understand the pandemic and the impact that this has had on their lives. Children were able to explain why they must wash their hands, and wear masks when out in the community.

The staff continue to safeguard the children. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place to support the staff in keeping the children safe. These are regularly reviewed and updated when necessary, so that the staff have accurate information and guidance on risk reduction. Professionals and parents said that the staff know and understand the children's individual risks.

Behaviour management plans are clear and informative. The plans help the staff to identify the potential triggers for unwanted behaviour and understand how to manage the behaviour. Children are involved in writing these plans, which helps them to invest in them.

Leaders and managers

A stable staff team has been in place during the pandemic. This has ensured that positive, safe relationships have been maintained. The manager had a contingency plan in place in case the staff or children contracted COVID-19 or had to self-isolate.

Partnership working between the manager and external professionals is effective. Social workers said that the manager informs them of any concerns and looks at ways of improving outcomes.

The managerial monitoring has improved. The staff said that they are supported by the manager and deputy manager. Regular good-quality supervision supports the staff to develop their practice.

The staff have undertaken the organisation's mandatory training and some face-to-face training had begun before the new restrictions were put in place. However, not all staff have achieved a relevant level 3 qualification within the required timescale.

The manager has met seven requirements from the last inspection. One requirement is repeated.

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>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ('the Level 3 Diploma'); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1 April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or</p> <p>in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1 April 2014, 1 April 2016. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b)(5)(a)(b))</p>	28/01/2021

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1256452

Registered provider: Surecare Residential Limited

Registered provider address: 13a Apton Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire
CM23 3SP

Responsible individual: Emma Barr

Registered manager: Belinda Devenny

Inspector

Trish Palmer, Social Care Inspector

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