

1235653

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to five children aged 11 to 17. In its statement of purpose, the provider states that care is provided to children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in December 2019.

Visit dates: 13 to 14 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 6 January 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

Children are settled living at the home. Positive feedback was received from social workers regarding the quality of the care provided by staff and the progress that children make. Although children declined to meet with the inspector during the visit, they looked relaxed in the company of staff and at ease in the home environment.

Staff help children to remain safe and healthy. Children are given 'COVID' packs when they leave the home, which include face masks and hand sanitiser. Visitors to the home have their temperatures taken by staff and are reminded of social distancing rules before being allowed in.

Children benefit from appropriate relationships with staff. Staff hold regular keywork sessions when children can discuss their concerns or worries. This has helped children to talk about their personal issues alongside other significant events including the current pandemic.

Most children attend and engage in education. Staff support children to travel to and from schools and colleges safely. They also encourage those children who receive home tuition to participate in their learning.

Staff are mindful of the need to support children's mental health and well-being. Care plans highlight where concerns exist, such as the risk that children may engage in self-harmful behaviour/s. Risk assessments guide staff in how best to reduce risk. For example, staff routinely check on children who spend long periods of time in their own bedrooms and who do not engage with staff or other children.

Children have opportunities to express how they feel and contribute to the running of the home. Regular house meetings provide children with the chance to talk about what it is like living together and to contribute to meal planning. Staff also use the meetings to help children to consider wider issues, such as a recent 'COVID quiz', where discussions took place about the risks of misinformation.

The safety of children

During the early part of the pandemic, the home experienced an unsettled period. Several incidents took place in which children exhibited challenging behaviour, including assaults against staff. Police were called to the home four times to assist staff to deal with these events. However, since the summer, children have displayed less disruptive behaviour.

Written assessments provide staff with an overview of the risks posed to children and highlight intervention strategies to keep children safe. One social worker praised the home's approach of balancing the need to manage a child's risk of exploitation

with supporting their increasing levels of independence. However, records do not always capture the progress made by children in reducing their risk/s.

The home has appropriate policies and procedures in place to address safeguarding concerns. When any allegations are made against staff, managers ensure that children are listened to and kept safe and that due processes are followed.

Staff encourage and support children to behave appropriately. Physical restraint is appropriate and is only used by staff as a last resort. Staff focus their attention on de-escalating situations and allow children time and space to calm down.

Leaders and managers

The home is experiencing a period of transition. The current registered manager has resigned and is due to leave his position at the end of October. The responsible individual stated that the deputy manager will be supported by the registered manager of the provider's other children's home. This plan will remain until a more permanent arrangement can be made.

The, soon-to-be-vacant registered manager's position means that the home has had three different registered managers in the past three years. Staff spoken with said that they feel supported to undertake their roles. However, another change of registered manager has created uncertainty over the approach that a new manager may bring.

Placing social workers commented positively about the way in which the home is run. Feedback received by the inspector confirmed that communication between the home and external care professionals is suitable. When necessary, managers and staff appropriately challenge placing authorities to put in place the specific packages of education or healthcare that children need.

An independent visitor completes monthly monitoring visits to the home and highlights to managers where shortfalls occur. The registered manager conducts internal monitoring; however, the subsequent reports do not contain the views of children, staff or feedback from placing authorities.

Two of the recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed. A reduction in the number of agency staff working on each shift means that a suitable number of permanent staff work daily. In addition, the number of children in receipt of full-time education has improved.

It was not possible to review the one requirement, or the other recommendations made at the last inspection. Therefore, these are 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
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	29/12/2020

Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The Statement of Purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- Regulations 35–39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. Case records must be kept up-to-date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. Children's case records must be kept for 75 years from the date of birth of the child, or if the child dies before the age of 18, for 15 years from the date of his or her death. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- Staff should understand factors that affect children's motivation to behave in a socially acceptable way. Staff should encourage an enthusiasm for positive behaviour through the use of positive behaviour strategies in line with the child's relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.13)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should:

- detail the necessary management and staffing structure, (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff, to enable the delivery of the home's Statement of Purpose;

- detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications);

- detail the process for managing and improving poor performance;

- detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33 (4)(b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home.

The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home's manager. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

- The ethos of the home should support each child to learn, emphasising the value of independent study and reading for enjoyment. The home must make available suitable facilities, equipment and resources for learning and ensure that the home's routines do not form barriers to children wishing to use the home's resources to study. Staff must support children with home study by encouraging them to learn independent study skills and helping them to practise those skills. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
In particular, staff should update risk assessments and intervention plans to ensure that the progress made by children in reducing their risk taking behaviour is captured.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1235653

Registered provider: Children of the Mangrove Limited

Registered provider address: Chester House, Fulham Green, 81–83 Fulham High Street, London SW6 3JA

Responsible individual: Lucy Addington

Registered manager: Ronald Akinrinmade

Inspector

Kevin Whatley, Social Care Inspector

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