

1271607

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for children and young people with a range of complex needs and/or autism spectrum disorder and associated learning disabilities. Children and young people are aged between eight and 18 years old.

The home has been without a registered manager since September 2020. As an interim measure, the responsible individual is in day-to-day charge of the home. A new manager has been recruited and is due to start in their post.

Visit dates: 28 to 29 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 23 October 2019

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

Staff provide children with highly individualised care. This supports children to make good progress. Staff's nurturing and sensitive approach has helped children to make sustained improvements in their self-esteem and confidence. For example, one child who previously spent most of her time in her bedroom, now spends time with staff in communal areas of the home.

Children live in a home which is maintained to a high standard. Children have chosen their bedroom furniture and have influenced the décor around the home. Staff are currently creating a sensory room for the children. A parent told the inspector, 'She had her room painted, furniture of her choosing and recently staff gave her a budget to purchase a fish tank. She also has a dedicated shower room in the home, so that's helped her with her sensory issues.'

Children's education success is central to the ethos of the home. Both children attend the on-site school. Staff work hard to ensure that children are supported with their education. When barriers to children accessing their education emerge, managers are good advocates in overcoming these.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have supported children to stay in contact with their family and friends.

The safety of children

Staff understand the risks that children face. Highly effective and proactive planning by staff helps to identify potential risks to children and the strategies needed to manage these. Risk assessments provide clear guidance to staff on how they should protect children.

Managers and staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures. This ensures that staff understand their own responsibilities for protecting children. Allegations of abuse and harm are investigated quickly and thoroughly.

Staff are successful at managing children's behaviours and therefore only use physical restraint as a last resort. Staff place an emphasis on verbal de-escalation, and this approach further enhances children's feelings of safety and security. Managers undertake thorough evaluations of all incidents and use these to identify any patterns and areas of learning.

Staff set clear and consistent boundaries for children. Staff help children to identify triggers that make them feel angry or upset and develop techniques that they can use when they feel like this.

Managers have implemented a range of risk assessments and contingency plans to manage the risks associated with COVID-19. There is range of additional practical measures in place to help keep children and staff safe.

Leaders and managers

The home has been without a registered manager since September 2020. A new manager has been appointed and is due to start working in the home shortly. In the interim period, the responsible individual is based at the home and has been providing day-to-day oversight.

The responsible individual's motivation and enthusiasm are infectious. She receives praise from children, staff and other professionals. She talks with pride about her staff and the children's achievements.

The responsible individual uses a range of monitoring systems to understand the quality of care provided to children. Because of this, she has a detailed understanding of the care that children receive. She uses this information to inform the development of the service and to continually improve it.

The responsible individual sets a high benchmark, which her staff strive to achieve. Staff want their home to be the best, and they all have high aspirations for children.

The responsible individual and staff place considerable emphasis on the importance of listening to children and they take account of their views and opinions. Children's comments are used to review and appraise the quality of care provided by the home. Consequently, children feel valued.

Staff either hold the required level 3 diploma or are currently working to achieve this. Plans are in place to ensure that they complete this within the required timescales. Staff complete child-specific training that informs their practice and meets children's individual and diverse needs.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1271607

Registered provider: Options Autism (4) Limited

Registered provider address: Options Autism (4) Limited, Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Heath, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 5JG

Responsible individual: Rachel Gillott

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Annemarie Parker, Social Care Inspector

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