

1216657

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a local charitable organisation. The home provides care and accommodation for up to two children or young people with behavioural difficulties.

**Visit dates:** 13 to 14 October 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 11 November 2019

**Previous inspection judgement:** Requires improvement to be good

Not all of the requirements and the recommendation from the full inspection have been reviewed. Where not reviewed or found to be met, they have been repeated and carried over to the next inspection.

## 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**

The home provides care for young people who require medium- and long-term placements. Young people benefit from stability. They receive care and support from staff who recognise that some young people do not want a replacement family.

All young people have education and vocational placements. Staff encourage young people to attend education and pursue their interests. This improves life chances.

Staff support young people to move to semi-independence. One social worker said that the young person has had a successful long-term placement. However, he has now 'outgrown' the home. Effective preparation for independence is essential in improving the long-term outcomes for young people.

Staff have worked consistently to ensure the healthcare of young people. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on routine care, but young people have had their health needs understood and addressed.

Staff have not always been effective in listening or communicating with young people. This leads to young people not feeling listened to. This has led to a complaint. A plan is in place to improve communication. This plan will be reviewed by the social worker and the young person.

### **The safety of children**

Since the last inspection, there have been significant reductions in incidents of young people going missing from the home. This is because social workers, staff and young people agree on practical and safe arrangements for free time. Staff keep in contact with young people to check on their welfare. Young people show respect to staff in adhering to expectations.

Behaviour management is a strength of this home. There have been no physical interventions since the last inspection. Staff are skilled at de-escalating incidents and diverting young people from negative behaviours. All staff have up-to-date physical intervention training.

Partnership working with the police and safeguarding agencies is effective. Staff work well with other agencies to protect young people from the risk of harm. There has been one safeguarding incident since the last inspection. Managers acted quickly. They followed safeguarding guidance and demonstrated robust safeguarding practice.

## Leaders and managers

The home has not had a registered manager in post since June 2020. This has had no significant impact on the day-to-day operation of the home. This is because a new manager has taken on full managerial responsibility. The new manager is applying for registration with Ofsted. She is appropriately qualified and experienced in residential care.

The manager is respected by her staff team. Staff continue to receive regular supervision and training. They say that they feel supported.

An independent visitor monitors the operation of the home. This system drives improvement. Internal quality assurance is thorough but does not comply with regulation. Focused monitoring would be more effective.

The manager has a clear understanding of young people’s plans, needs and progress. She tracks the progress that young people make. This means she can show how the home is having a positive impact on young people’s long-term outcomes.

The maintenance and decoration of the home are now of a high standard throughout. This is an improvement since the full inspection.

## 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 children’s views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>develop positive relationships with them;</p> <p>engage with them; and</p> <p>take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children’s care and welfare and their lives.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>	<p>16/11/2020</p>

<p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>ascertain and consider each child’s views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child’s best interests when making decisions about the child’s care and welfare;</p> <p>help each child to express views, wishes and feelings;</p> <p>help each child to understand how the child’s views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child;</p> <p>regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home’s care.</p> <p>(Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</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—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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 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>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(d)(e))</p>	16/11/2020
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.</p> <p>(Regulation 32 (1))</p>	16/11/2020
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p>	16/11/2020

<p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.</p> <p>(Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))</p>	
<p>The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children’s home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard).</p> <p>When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person.</p> <p>(Regulation 46 (1)(2))</p>	<p>16/11/2020</p>

## Recommendations

- Supervision of staff practice should ensure that individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home so they understand what they would need to do if they found other staff misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of a child. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 43, paragraph 9.14)
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Sufficient staff means a home having enough suitably trained staff (including someone in a management role) on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children in the home, and that those staff are able to respond to emergency placements, where accepted. The registered person must demonstrate every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that children’s attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring that the employment of any temporary staff will not prevent children from receiving the continuity of care that they need (regulation 31 (1)). (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 51, paragraph 10.1)

- Those with a leadership and/or management role should be visible and accessible to staff and able to deliver their leadership and/or management responsibilities. Any registered manager employed in the home should have sufficient capacity to ensure that the quality standards are met for each child in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.7)
- Regulation 45 sets out requirements for the registered person to have a system in place which allows them to monitor the matters set out in the regulation at least once every six months; also see regulation 13 (2)(h) (the leadership and management standard). The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. Reviews should be underpinned by the quality standards as described in regulations 5 to 14. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)
- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that particular time and any areas of high risk to the children that the home is designed to care for, such as episodes of going missing or exploitation. They will also consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. There is no expectation that the registered person will review the home against every part of the quality standards every six months – registered persons should use their professional judgement to decide which factors to focus on. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next six months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.4)

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1216657

**Registered provider:** Nottinghamshire YMCA

**Registered provider address:** YMCA, 4 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG1 4FG

**Responsible individual:** Brenda Serrant

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Amanda Ellis, Social Care Inspector

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