

1259178

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This home provides accommodation and therapeutic care for two children aged 13 to 17 years who are affected by mental ill health. It is owned and operated by a small private company.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in October 2019.

Visit dates: 21 to 22 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 28 September 2018

Previous inspection judgement: Not judged

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 feel listened to, valued and respected.

Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, children have been able to take part in a variety of activities in the home and in the community. Children have had bake-off days, celebrations, BBQs, trips to the zoo, walks, shopping trips, pamper days and meals out. Staff have helped children create memory books with photos of all the fun things they have been doing. These memories help children to reflect positively on what has been a challenging time for them.

Staff have understood the importance of education during the COVID-19 restrictions and supported children to access education online. Children have attained awards in mathematics and English and have developed their skills and knowledge through AQAs.

The diversity of the staff team means that children have had opportunities to discuss and understand culture and religion. Consequently, children have a good understanding and knowledge of equality and diversity.

Technology has been vital for children to keep in touch with their families. Using technology to speak to and make video calls with their families has enabled children to maintain important links. Even when there are restrictions on who children can contact, staff have supported them to keep in touch appropriately. This has reassured children and their families that everyone is safe and well.

Children have continued to receive support from a therapist despite the COVID-19 restrictions. This has meant children have had the support they need uninterrupted.

The safety of children

Staffing levels and knowledge of children's care plans help staff keep children safe. Children's views are considered when devising behaviour plans, but occasionally those plans do not fully detail the strategies a child has suggested staff use. This has the potential to reduce children's participation in their care and to compromise consistency.

Children have been helped to understand the risks associated with COVID-19. This has included holding group discussions and the staff and children doing online training. The manager has also sent a letter to the children to explain what was happening. Visitors to the home are checked for COVID-19 symptoms and a plentiful supply of hand sanitiser is available at the home.

Managers have responded appropriately to children's concerns and complaints. When allegations have been raised, these have been reported to the relevant agencies and investigated.

Children's care plans include any restrictions imposed by courts. Managers ensure that staff understand the restrictions which help keep children safe.

Managers have continued to prioritise staff training, with all staff having access to learning opportunities online and more recently face-to-face. This has resulted in increased knowledge and confidence when working with children living at the home.

Leaders and managers

The manager is child-focused and wants the best for children living at the home. Despite the COVID-19 restrictions and some turnover of staff, he has provided stability for the children.

Good communication between the manager and other professionals has meant children have continued to receive the support and services they have needed during the COVID-19 restrictions.

The independent visitor has carried out their recent monthly visits to the home virtually. The visitor has used technology to talk to children and others, which has allowed for independent oversight of the home to monitor children's progress and well-being.

Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the manager has made sure that all staff receive support through regular supervision and frequent team meetings. This has enabled staff to reflect on their practice and to have an opportunity to discuss children's care as a group.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11). This is with regard to ensuring that a child's views about how they are held when physical intervention is necessary are fully recorded in their plans.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1259178

Registered provider: Solid Global Limited

Registered provider address: Suite G, Eldon House, 24 Central Square, High Street, Erdington, Birmingham, West Midlands B23 6RY

Responsible individual: Octovus Muchemenye

Registered manager: Yaw Quainoo

Inspector

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

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