

1272220

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children and/or young people who have emotional and/or social difficulties. The home is owned and operated by a private provider.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since September 2020.

Visit dates: 20 to 21 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 12 August 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

The children benefit from warm and nurturing relationships with staff, and the staff know and understand the children well. The children enjoy spending time with the staff both in the home and when they go out on activities. As a result, the children's self-esteem and confidence improve, and they learn to recognise safe and appropriate relationships.

The staff consistently promote the importance of education and support children to meet their learning targets. The children have continued with educational activities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of this support, one child is now accessing school for the first time in two years. Good school attendance promotes children's educational development and provides them with social opportunities that enable them to make new friends. This further supports their self-esteem and confidence.

The children's emotional well-being is improving. The children attend regular sessions with the organisation's psychologist. The work with the psychologist helps the children to express and explore their feelings. This helps them to move forward with their lives.

The children learn the importance of maintaining good physical health. They benefit from working with specialist professionals such as a dietician. As a result, some children are now involved in managing their own diets and they understand the importance of staying healthy.

The staff help the children to enjoy regular visits with their families where appropriate. This family time helps to promote the children's identity. The staff support them to do this by telephone and by meeting in safe spaces. This has continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and means that the children do not feel isolated.

The safety of children

The children are learning how to keep themselves safe, and their risks are reducing. This is because the staff help them to recognise risks to their safety. Some children have stopped self-harming and they are now able to use strategies to manage their feelings positively. Where able to do so, the children are independently identifying risks to their safety and planning their own activities.

The children's individual risk assessment and behaviour support plans provide staff with actions to reduce and manage risks to the children's safety. The staff undertake additional training in specific therapeutic techniques. This enables them to support children in crisis positively.

Recent training in the use of physical intervention provides staff with additional skills to use if the risks to the children's safety are exceptionally high. The use of physical intervention is a last resort to reduce the immediate risk of harm to children.

The staff receive training to help them understand the risks to the children and to help them identify signs of abuse. They know how to report and follow through safeguarding concerns. When there are concerns about the children's safety and welfare, leaders and managers quickly report these concerns to the relevant agencies. Leaders and managers ensure that their concerns are acted on to make sure that children are safe.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager leads the staff team by example. She places the children's needs first when planning their care. The registered manager ensures that children are actively involved in their care planning and the running of the home. The children's involvement helps them to feel a sense of value and belonging.

Leaders and managers advocate strongly on behalf of the children. They make sure that the children's wishes are heard and that they receive the care and support they need. This means that children continue to make good progress.

The staff said that they are supported by the registered manager. As a result, they enjoy their work and feel that they can talk to the manager any time. The staff receive regular supervision, and this helps them to reflect on their work with the children.

Leaders and managers work closely with other professionals from schools, mental health services and medical services. As a result, there is effective sharing of information between professionals. This ensures that the children receive the specialist support they need.

The registered manager understands the strengths of the service and areas for development. However, some of the monitoring systems are not always effective. For example, recording systems relating to staff supervision and staff training do not always include all relevant information, such as when training needs to be refreshed. The gaps in information hinder the registered manager's oversight of the service.

There are gaps in some staff recruitment files, including missing previous employment references in one file. These gaps in information hinder management oversight and mean that essential checks are not consistently completed to ensure that only suitable staff work with the children.

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
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (2)(h))	22/11/2020
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(3)(d))	22/11/2020

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1272220

Registered provider: Tees-Valley Care Limited

Registered provider address: Cargo Fleet Offices, Dormor Way, South Bank, Middlesbrough Road, South Bank, Middlesbrough TS6 6XH

Responsible individual: Daniel Johns

Registered manager: Olivia Kriehn

Inspectors

Jamie Richardson, Social Care Inspector, Lead
Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector

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