

1254740

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a national provider of children's homes. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for two children or young people who need emotional and/or behavioural support.

Visit dates: 20 to 21 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 17 September 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Good

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 young people benefit from the consistent routines and boundaries in the home, which run smoothly and help them to feel safe. There is currently one young person living in the home. The staff provide the young person with loving, nurturing care.

The staff understand the importance of young people regularly attending school and making progress with their education. One young person recently achieved a school's 'superstar' award in recognition of the progress they have made with their schoolwork since arriving at the home.

The staff succeed in meeting the young person's health needs. They challenge health professionals if they believe a young person requires a medication review. The staff respond to the emotional and physical health needs of the young person promptly and obtain the necessary professional support.

The young person is supported to channel their energy positively. He participates in a range of activities inside and outside of the home, such as biking, walking and building dens. The staff have supported him to learn how to grow strawberries and carrots in the garden, which he has enjoyed.

The staff understand the importance of supporting young people to stay in touch with their families, who are invited to the home for meals and to celebrate special occasions whenever possible.

The safety of children

Safeguarding procedures are effective. The staff have a positive working relationship with safeguarding professionals. Assessment of identified risks is comprehensive. Risk assessment documents offer the staff clear guidance about how best to safely manage any incidents.

The recent mix of the young people living in the home was not positive. The staff were unable to safely manage the young people's behaviour. Investigation of the incidents that led to the young people having to move from the home is being undertaken by leaders and managers to inform future staff practice.

The staff encourage positive behaviour through rewards and helping the young people to learn from their mistakes. The use of consequences is minimal, and if a consequence is given to a young person, the manager scrutinises records to ensure the consequence is effective, fair and proportionate.

The staff are vigilant and understand the reasons why a young person may go missing from the home. They follow the missing-from-home procedures, such as following the young person or calling the police if necessary. The manager ensures that on their return, young people have a return to home interview so that any relevant information that may help prevent a young person going missing again can be comprehensively acted upon.

Leaders and managers

The home has recently been taken over by a national provider of children's homes. There are improved quality monitoring systems in place. Monthly monitoring visits are undertaken by an independent person who sets actions for the manager to address before the next visit.

The staff team is consistent and stable, following a period of staff shortages. The manager was covering vacant shifts and was unable to focus on management tasks. On two occasions, notifications of serious incidents were not sent by the manager to Ofsted and the quality monitoring of the home was not effective or comprehensive.

The staff comment positively about the quality of training and supervision. The staff benefit from a wide range of training topics that ensures they have the skills and knowledge they need to undertake their roles effectively.

The young person enjoys living in a home that is generally well decorated and homely. However, the garden has an untidy appearance and some carpets are stained. Plans to improve the garden and replace the carpets are in place. Throughout the home, the young person's hobbies and interests are evident.

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 registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children at least once every six months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p>	13/11/2020

(Regulation 45(1)(2)(a)(b)(c))	
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers serious;</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>(Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))</p>	13/11/2020

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Homes should seek, as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, the registered manager must ensure that stained carpets are replaced, and the garden is tidied.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1254740

Registered provider: South West Childcare Services

Registered provider address: Maybrook House, Second Floor, Queensway, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Guy Mammatt

Registered manager: Stacy-Ann Parry

Inspector

Tina Maddison, Social Care Inspector

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