

1249264

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company. It is currently registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home's registered manager resigned in April 2020. A new manager has recently been appointed and has submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

Visit dates: 21 to 22 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 27 November 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Outstanding

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 and young people enjoy strong and trusting relationships. Care planning is highly detailed and comprehensive. This provides staff with a shared and solid understanding of young people's needs. Of one young person, a social worker commented, 'Staff really get him. His transition to this home was brilliant.'

Staff have ensured that all young people understand the significance of the COVID-19 pandemic. They have dealt with the issue carefully and sensitively to avoid young people becoming overanxious about the pandemic, without minimising the important messages from the government about how to stay safe and healthy.

Staff acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic has been especially difficult for some young people, causing them worry and emotional anguish. Staff tried hard during lockdown to keep young people busy, to promote both their physical and mental health. Young people were encouraged to take regular daily walks and participate in activities in and around the home. Some showed excellent resilience while others struggled somewhat.

For one young person who previously had been frequently attending a local youth club, anxiety and lockdown restrictions led him to isolate himself more in his room, playing with his games console. Staff managed to limit his time on his games console and successfully encouraged him to help in the garden, planting and caring for a vegetable patch. He also enjoyed helping with outdoor maintenance, painting the summer house and repairing garden furniture.

Staff have actively promoted young people's learning and for some, assisted them to make a positive transition to their own home and into college. One young person still resident in the home has started to attend a local college. This has increased his confidence and given him greater opportunity to socialise outside the home.

Professionals speak highly of the support young people have received at this home. Generally, young people are said to make positive progress. They say that staff look after them well and ensure that young people's voices are heard, making sure they have good access to independent advocacy.

The safety of children

Young people have been kept safe during the COVID-19 pandemic and they say they feel safe living at this home.

Despite there being a few occasions initially when young people went missing from home to see friends at the start of lockdown, this did not continue as young people

understood the seriousness of the situation. Staff and young people followed daily televised briefings to learn about the nature of COVID-19 and the restrictions they had to follow to keep themselves and others safe.

Young people have mainly observed the government restrictions and guidance on staying safe and preventing the spread of the virus. Young people's individual risk assessments have been reviewed and updated to take account of the further risk posed by the pandemic. Young people understand the need to social distance and the importance of good hygiene regimes personally and around the home.

As restrictions have eased, most young people have acted very responsibly by observing social distancing rules in shops, wearing face coverings and frequently using antibacterial products when handwashing is not possible.

Young people's risk-taking behaviours, including self-harm, have been well managed and overall remain low. Staff have not had cause to use physical intervention during this period. This has been very positive both in avoiding close contact that could transmit infection and avoiding any potential risk of injury.

Young people know how to complain if they are unhappy or have a concern. They know any issues they raise will be fully explored by managers and resolved.

Leaders and managers

A new manager has recently been appointed to replace the home's former registered manager who left in April 2020. Despite several interim management arrangements, leadership of the home has remained strong.

The manager has already made his application to Ofsted to become the home's registered manager. He has good experience in working in children's residential care and is ably supported by two deputy managers. All managers appear to be working in good cooperation and have a good understanding of young people's needs.

Managers acknowledge that young people have also experienced the loss of several staff who left the home about the same time as the former registered manager. However, the staff team and young people have shown remarkable resilience and managed well through this difficult time.

Managers have recruited new staff, who appear to have settled quickly into the home and are establishing positive relationships with young people.

Staff training and supervision have remained a priority and been well maintained during this period. Staff have also had their annual appraisal and say they feel their personal development is a priority and valued.

External monitoring has not been as consistent during this period. There has been a change in the home's independent visitor, and young people have not routinely been seen and spoken to. As the home intends to maintain remote external scrutiny, it is

important that young people are seen and spoken to, making use of the available technology that can facilitate this.

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 ensure that an independent person visits the children’s home at least once each month.</p> <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires.</p> <p>(Regulation 44 (1)(2)(a))</p> <p>This relates specifically to routinely offering young people the opportunity to talk in private with the independent person.</p>	<p>14/12/2020</p>

Children’s home details

Unique reference number: 1249264

Registered provider: Radical Services Limited

Registered provider address: 2 The Calls, Leeds LS2 7JU

Responsible individual: Matthew McFadzean

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Gillian Walters, Social Care Inspector

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