

SC439535

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a private provider. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children and/or young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager is suitably qualified and has been registered with Ofsted since August 2013.

**Visit dates:** 14 to 15 October 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 25 February 2020

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

Young people say that they enjoy living in the home and that they are able to speak to the staff if they have any worries or concerns. The staff are caring and nurturing and this helps the young people to develop trusting relationships that support their development and progress. One young person said, 'My whole life has changed since I have been here.'

The young people are able to continue to have family time throughout the COVID-19 restrictions. The staff encourage them to use different forms of technology and social media so that they are not isolated from their families and friends.

The staff are supporting the young people to understand the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has on their emotional well-being. During key-work sessions, the young people are able to reflect on their feelings. This helps them to manage their frustrations and anxieties regarding the restrictions in place.

The young people make the most of the home's large outdoor space to keep active and pursue their hobbies and interests. For example, they recently enjoyed developing a small allotment. The staff say that spending this quality time with the young people has strengthened their relationships. This also promotes the young people's social and emotional well-being and develops their life skills.

Two young people were not in education prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff have used this time to help the young people to understand the importance of education and to identify suitable school placements that meet the young people's needs. The young people are now attending full-time education and are enthusiastic about their aspirations for the future.

### **The safety of children**

The young people start to learn how to keep themselves safe. This is because the staff use key-work sessions to help the young people to understand potential risks to their safety. As a result, these risks continue to reduce and there has been only one safeguarding concern since the last inspection.

Young people do not use substances or alcohol. They do not go missing and there have been no physical restraints since July 2019. The risks to the young people are well understood by staff, and the staff use their positive relationships with the young people to encourage good behaviour. The young people say that they can talk to staff and 'feel listened to and valued'. This means that they are able to express any anger or frustration in an appropriate way and work with staff towards a solution to manage these emotions.

The staff responded quickly to a medication error. They immediately sought medical advice to ensure that this error did not negatively impact on the young person's health. The manager completed an investigation into the incident and developed a new protocol for dispensing medication. Additional training for all staff was also provided. This response minimises the risk of a similar mistake happening in the future.

### **Leaders and managers**

The home is managed by an experienced manager. All of the requirements raised at the last inspection have been met.

The manager has continued to ensure that young people's plans are regularly reviewed to take into account the impact of COVID-19 on their progress and development. The staff say that they are well supported by leaders and managers, and that they have 'pulled together' to support and safeguard the young people during the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that the young people benefit from working with a stable staff team who know and understand them.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff receive regular supervision. This provides staff with the emotional space that they need to reflect on the impact their performance has on the care that the young people receive. The manager is committed to staff development and training and this improves staff's ability to meet the needs of the young people.

Some professionals report that managers and staff work well with multi-agency partners. However, the manager did not ensure that the staff worked with health agencies, including general practitioners, to meet the health needs of one young person who has recently moved on from the home. This meant that this young person's health needs were not fully met.

The manager has a good understanding of the performance of the service. She uses a range of monitoring tools to evaluate the effectiveness of the care provided to the young people. However, the independent visitor has not consulted with the young people, or their families, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the lifting of restrictions, they have not undertaken a physical visit to the home. This means that leaders and managers receive little feedback from others regarding any shortfalls in practice.

## **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 health and well-being standard is that the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and</p> <p>children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that each child is registered as a patient with a general medical practitioner and a registered dental practitioner; and</p> <p>that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require.<br/>(Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(b)(c))</p> | 27/11/2020 |
| <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; and</p> <p>to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home’s records (except for a child’s case records, unless the child and the child’s placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2)(a)(b))</p>  | 27/11/2020 |

## Children’s home details

**Unique reference number:** SC439535

**Registered provider:** Pebbles Care Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** David Hitchen

**Registered manager:** Kimberley Crabtree

## Inspectors

Deb Duffy, Social Care Inspector  
Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector

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