

SC046524

# Assurance visit

## Information about this secure children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict young people's liberty. The home can accommodate up to 10 children and/or young people who are aged between 10 and 17 years.

It provides accommodation for up to five young people placed by the Youth Custody Service and five young people accommodated under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989 placed by local authorities.

Admission of any young person under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who is under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

The manager is registered with Ofsted.

**Visit dates:** 2 to 4 November 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 10 March 2020

**Previous inspection judgement:** Improved 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**

Children with complex needs, risks and vulnerabilities are being well cared for. Managers have considered the impact on the children of risks associated with COVID-19 in all the decisions made about their care. During restrictions, staff have proactively promoted opportunities for children to maintain relationships with family members and professionals. Staff have supported safe and positive experiences.

Staff are skilled and experienced in building trusted relationships with the children and responding to the combination of their needs and behaviours. There is continuous assessment, and comprehensive records, to support effective working with individual children and groups of children.

Staff prepare children for moving on from the home effectively, through the creative use of virtual contacts, in addition to carefully planned time spent in the community. Individualised and bespoke mobility planning and appropriate placement decisions promote better outcomes for children.

Social workers and a range of professionals working with children in the home are positive about the care that children are receiving. Professionals refer to well-planned, well-supported admissions and transitions for children moving on from the home. Children are involved and listened to regarding the pace and timeliness of their transition from the home.

Education arrangements and the curriculum are informed by children's needs and interests. Children access enrichment activities focused on developing their understanding of key current and relevant topics in society, such as diversity, history and ecology. Managers imaginatively use music as a platform to engage children in education activities and to provide opportunities to further their personal development. As a result, they have increased self-esteem and confidence.

Leaders and managers have identified the need for a tailored programme of personal development for vulnerable girls, in particular, where they learn together how to keep safe and stay healthy. Managers are in the process of developing similar provision to meet the specific needs of vulnerable boys.

Despite limited healthcare presence on site, children have benefited from good mental and physical healthcare. Children have been able to access support when required. Children have improving health as a result of the effective use of tools

such as an individual sleep plan and a cognitive analytical therapy map. Children's health records are detailed, well maintained and support good transitions.

'Secure Stairs' approach to integrated care is well embedded throughout the home and has been delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes regular multi-agency formulation meetings and group supervision for care staff. Children are fully involved in these meetings and often choose to present their own information.

Examples of good responses to children's health needs include coordinating and contributing to the mental health assessment of two children, and ensuring that children have timely access to care to address symptoms of substance misuse withdrawal.

### **The safety of children**

Staff know each child's history and understand how their life experiences impact on their behaviours and needs. From the start, there are clear and consistent boundaries, supported by rewards and consequences, that children generally respond well to.

There has been an increase in measures of control, such as the separation of children and an increase in the use of physical restraints. This is associated with managing the impact of COVID-19 and the complex needs of children living in the home since the last inspection. During this time, there was an increase in some children attempting to harm themselves and an increase in children causing injuries and harm to staff.

Managers carefully monitor emerging trends. Records of measures of control are comprehensive, they are monitored in a timely way, and managers ensure that there is robust challenge within the processes. Records include children's views and staff reflection.

Incidents are scrutinised by home managers, the independent visitor, an independent safeguarding lead from the local authority and CCTV is reviewed where appropriate. All social workers are informed of incidents and are encouraged to examine all available information.

During this visit, inspectors reviewed a sample of records, including viewing relevant CCTV footage. There is evidence of the use of de-escalation techniques, and of interventions being informed by children's needs and risks, which are subject to continuous multi-agency assessment and review.

Staff and managers take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They seek advice from relevant specialist services to inform practice. Staff are demonstrating consistent, resilient parenting and sensitive, thoughtful decision-making.

There have been a small number of allegations against staff working with children. Safeguarding procedures have been followed, including referrals to, and seeking advice from, the designated officer from the local authority.

Staff benefit from training and development to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to understand and intervene to support children to manage complex needs and behaviours. Staff receive training from child and adolescent mental health team.

There have been a small number of complaints from children. Social workers are notified. Resolution meetings are held. Children are encouraged to comment on the outcome.

### **Leaders and managers**

The home has an experienced manager and management team. All managers are aspirational for the children and ambitious about the development of staff skills. They identify and nurture talent within the staff team. They also identify and address performance concerns and where practice may need strengthening.

There are good, effective internal and external monitoring mechanisms in place. The members of the management team know the progress of children and staff.

Managers are not complacent about staff training, development and supervision. They are developing improved quality assurance of supervision practice in the home.

A significant management focus has been the commissioning of a healthcare contract, with a new provider, planned for February 2021. Managers have been involved with NHS England and the provider in the designing of the delivery model. It has been agreed that children will be involved in the recruitment of the on-site healthcare team.

Partners, agencies and professionals provide positive feedback about the care children receive in the home. Children benefit from timely sharing of information, and collaborative and integrated working. This is particularly evident in how effectively education, care and health staff work together to identify and meet children's needs and progress their plans.

There have been challenges as a result of restrictions due to COVID-19. Staff and managers have been flexible and committed in continuing to deliver the service. Managers have comprehensive plans and resources in place to support the management of the risk of infection in the home and respond to advice from Public Health England.

This visit has found that previous requirements and recommendations are met, including recommendations regarding meeting children's education and health needs.

## Secure children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC046524

**Registered provider:** Sheffield City Council

**Registered provider address:** Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield S1 2HH

**Responsible individual:** Carly Speechley

**Registered manager:** Kieran Hill

## Inspectors

Cathey Moriarty, Social Care Inspector

Cath Sikakana, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2020