

SC033457

Assurance visit

Information about this secure children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority. The home is approved by the Department for Education to restrict children's liberty. The home can accommodate up to 24 children who are aged between 10 and 17 years old. It provides for up to 14 children placed by the Youth Custody Service and 10 children accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 and who are placed by local authorities. Admission of any child under 13 years of age under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

The commissioning of health services in this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2007.

Visit dates: 24 to 26 November 2020

Previous inspection date: 7 January 2020

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 children benefit from highly individualised care from staff who are supportive. The staff's effective integrated working with education and health colleagues leads to children making positive progress in all areas of their lives. The staff understand the effect that children's life experiences have had on their behaviour and self-esteem. The children's comprehensive plans are child-centred and individualised, and implementation of these plans by staff supports the children to grow in confidence and resilience.

The children are supported to keep in touch with their families. The manager was quick to implement video technology during the COVID-19 pandemic when face-to-face contact was not possible. This technology has continued to be used throughout the pandemic in line with the children's requests. The manager and staff are planning ahead to put in place adaptations to the physical layout of the home so that children can have safe family contact over the Christmas period.

The children told inspectors that they have good relationships with the staff and can share any worries and concerns that they may have. The staff actively encourage the children to express their views. A junior leadership team of children representing their individual houses meets regularly with a senior manager to share their views about their care. These meetings provide the children with the opportunity to influence how they are looked after.

The staff are creative in providing stimulating activities for children. These include music sessions, cooking competitions, general knowledge quizzes and physical activities. The outdoor space at the home provides an area in which children can enjoy activities in the fresh air.

The children's education attendance has remained high during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the start of the first national lockdown period, the hours of education delivered dropped due to absences of care and education staff, though this quickly recovered. Education staff worked hard to ensure that the children received academic assignments during this period, which they completed well, supporting children's learning.

The managers have improved the provision of vocational training for the children through the addition of beauty therapy and painting and decorating courses. The curriculum focuses appropriately on developing key skills, such as English and mathematics, alongside employment-related skills and knowledge. The education

staff have successfully supported a good number of children to achieve their GCSEs. They provide bespoke teaching and support for children with high-level needs. The headteacher and the registered manager ensure that all staff work constructively so that children attend education and develop valuable skills and knowledge.

A well-led, flexible, multidisciplinary health team works hard to improve children's physical, mental and emotional well-being. The healthcare team's current working arrangements limit time at the home as the team members work remotely some of the time to safeguard themselves and others during the pandemic. However, they carry out visits when required to meet the children's individual needs. Each child has a comprehensive formulation plan, which identifies children's needs and how these needs will be met and helps staff to deliver a supportive and consistent approach.

When children are required to isolate in their rooms in line with Public Health England guidance, there are effective arrangements to manage this which promote and support children's well-being. The staff engage with children and ensure that the children can speak with staff in private and that children can access fresh air and engage in activities.

The staff support the children to move on from the home. For example, during the pandemic, staff have adapted how children meet their new carers, by using audio and video technology when visits to a child's prospective new home are not possible. The staff talk to the children about what to expect when they go out into the community. These discussions include the changes that have been made due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The manager confidently challenges placing authorities when children's transitions are delayed unnecessarily and engages with external agencies to advocate for children.

The safety of children

The home provides care for children with highly complex needs and challenging behaviour. The staff manage dynamics well to ensure that children are kept safe. Some children, who have highly complex needs and specific vulnerabilities, receive higher levels of supervision from the staff. Incidents of bullying are managed well to keep children safe. The staff are effective in supporting children to manage and reduce risk-taking behaviours, such as self-harm. Plans are individualised and provide staff with clear information and strategies to support the care of children.

The staff and managers work diligently to protect children. They implement the home's safeguarding policy when there are any allegations made. The manager reviews closed-circuit television (CCTV) recordings following any physical intervention to ensure that practice is appropriate. Any concerns identified that breach the home's policies and procedures are raised with the designated officer to help keep children safe. Following any incident, staff and children engage in debriefs to ensure that their views are sought, that learning is identified and that strategies are amended when appropriate. Consequently, the frequency of incidents reduces.

The use of single-separation with children (a child locked into their room alone due to serious risk to self or others) and managed-away (a child kept away from others in a locked area but with staff due to serious risk to themselves or other children) is appropriate. The manager's oversight ensures that children do not have restrictions imposed on them unnecessarily and, when they are required, it is for the minimum time necessary.

The children's safety is a high priority. The staff visually check the children who spend time alone in line with their risk assessments to help to keep them safe.

Leaders and managers

The manager is highly competent and experienced and sets high standards for the care of the children. He is managing the daily challenges brought about by the pandemic effectively and he empowers the staff to implement their ideas to drive further improvements for children. The staff spoke positively of the support that they receive from each other and managers.

The manager and staff have made every effort to overcome the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The manager works closely with Public Health England to address concerns effectively. The manager swiftly ensures that the staff are brought up to date with any new information. This approach ensures that the staff are confident and knowledgeable in working with the children in a calm manner to keep everyone safe.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant number of staff were required to shield or were off work ill or isolating. With the support of staff from other agencies and the flexibility of the core staff team, the children received care with minimal disruption to their daily lives.

The independent visitor continues to undertake monthly visits to the home to monitor the safety and well-being of the children. During the national lockdown and tier 3 restrictions, the visits have been virtual. However, through the support of the manager and the staff, the visitor is able to gain a good oversight of the home and speak with the children.

The manager has met the two requirements and one recommendation made at the last inspection. Consequently, the child's view is gained following a physical intervention and there is improved management review of physical interventions.

The manager carries out regular monitoring that culminates in a biannual monitoring report as required by regulations. However, he has not sent the report to Ofsted. The manager provided the report to inspectors at the time of the visit. This shortfall has no impact on children.

Some records require improving as some were not up to date. Management monitoring is not consistent in identifying these shortfalls.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p> <p>This particularly refers to the monitoring and review of children’s single-separation records.</p>	<p>8 January 2021</p>

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home’s policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- In particular, ensure that children’s risk management plans are up to date.
- The six-monthly report under Regulation 45 should be sent to Ofsted and the placing authority of all children in the home who are looked-after children. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 65, paragraph 15.3)

Secure children's home details

Unique reference number: SC033457

Registered provider: Leeds City Council

Registered provider address: Civic Hall, Calverley Street, Leeds LS1 1UR

Responsible individual: Joel Hanna

Registered manager: Francis N'Jie

Inspectors

Natalie Burton, Social Care Inspector

Catherine 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.

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, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020