

1244386

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care and accommodation for up to nine young people. The home's statement of purpose states that the home provides therapeutic care for young people who have social and/or emotional difficulties. The accommodation is arranged across two sites and the main home is currently closed for refurbishment.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2017.

**Visit dates:** 28 to 29 October 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 28 October 2019

**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**

Overall, young people generally receive a good standard of care. The home benefits from a committed staff team who aim to provide some consistency for young people. Young people living at the home say they have good relationships with the staff team. Staff understand the impact of trauma on young people and they strive to provide effective care to promote positive outcomes for those in their care.

Staff worked hard during the COVID-19 lockdown period to keep young people occupied and engaged in activities. However, young people are reluctant to engage in group activities and generally prefer to engage with staff on a one-to-one basis.

Two young people are engaging in education at the recently registered on-site education facility. Other young people have been more difficult to engage in both formal and informal education.

Staff have made positive use of online technology to support young people to keep in touch with families and friends when face-to-face contact has not been possible. However, ineffective communication between parents and the staff team means that arrangements are not always carried out in accordance with care plans.

Young people's identity needs are well met by the staff at the home. Staff ensure that any dietary needs due to health or faith practices are adhered to. Young people's physical health needs are met, and the home's therapeutic approach supports staff to meet young people's emotional health needs.

### **The safety of children**

Young people are generally safe while in the home. However, high levels of incidents of going missing from the home for many young people remain a real cause for concern. Staff are concerned when they are unable to contact young people and have no knowledge of their whereabouts or who they are with. Some young people told the inspector they spend little time in the home and do not give details of their whereabouts as they do not want to get others into trouble. A young person said, 'I am returning each night this week to sleep at the home only because my social worker has threatened to move me to a placement outside of London.'

Staff understand young people's vulnerabilities. However, risk assessments and behaviour support plans do not always accurately reflect this. Multiple errors were identified with these documents and they are not an accurate reflection of young people's individual needs. The manager is in the process of reviewing documents and providing appropriate training for staff to improve this.

Young people's behaviour is generally well managed and there are now fewer incidents of challenging behaviours. The use of physical intervention and sanctions has decreased with the transition of one young person out of the home.

All staff have received safeguarding training and say they feel confident in managing any safeguarding incidents.

### **Leaders and managers**

The registered manager acknowledges her team faced significant challenges at the time of the last inspection. Although the permanent staff team do hold the relevant qualifications, not all the temporary agency staff have been able to produce this certificate. This means that the manager has not been able to confirm whether some staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to support challenging young people appropriately. The manager is ensuring that when agency workers are required, she sees copies of their mandatory certificates before they work at the home.

Professionals from partner agencies speak highly of the manager and the staff team. They describe good levels of communication. A social worker said, 'The staff are particularly good at communicating with me daily on any missing behaviours and school attendance for my young person.' Another social worker was particularly complimentary of how well the staff have worked with a young person in preparing him for independence. This young person has successfully been supported to become a productive and mature member of society.

Staff benefit from good levels of support from the manager and from a psychologist. They said that the training they receive is of a good quality and gives them the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles. However, staff commented they would like the manager to take a more active role with young people in the home. This would help to create a homelier feeling in the house which is currently lacking.

Staff continue to receive regular reflective supervision and have attended virtual monthly team meetings using a range of technology. This gives the team the opportunity to reflect on their practice and improve their development.

The manager has worked well and guided the team throughout the COVID-19 lockdown to provide young people with the security and safety they need to thrive.

One requirement was made as a result of this assurance visit. This relates to notifying the regulator of serious incidents for young people in a timely manner. Two of the five requirements made at the last inspection have been met. Three requirements and three recommendations have been repeated from the last full inspection as these could not be completed due to the ongoing pandemic.

## 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))</p>	22 March 2021
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p>	22 March 2021

<p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement;</p> <p>raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority;</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible;</p> <p>help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment;</p> <p>help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and</p> <p>ensure that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(b))</p>	
<p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or</p>	<p>22 March 2021</p>

<p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or</p> <p>in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.</p> <p>The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual—</p> <p>does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or</p> <p>works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis.</p> <p>(Regulation 32 (2)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b))</p>	
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>(Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))</p>	<p>22 March 2021</p>

## Recommendations

- Ensure when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the children to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the children's relevant plan and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- 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. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)  
In particular, repair and replace damaged and missing bathroom doors. Young people's bed headboards must be repaired, and the kitchen television aerial must be replaced.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1244386

**Registered provider:** Sankofa Care Ltd

**Responsible individual:** Olivia Osei-Asibey

**Registered manager:** Abby Osei-Asibey

## Inspector

Juanita Mayers, 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