

2517054

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to three children. The provider states in its statement of purpose that it provides safe and secure living for children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home was registered with Ofsted in August 2020 and the manager was registered at the same time.

**Visit dates:** 8 to 9 December 2020

**Previous inspection date:** Not previously inspected

**Previous inspection judgement:** Not previously inspected

## 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**

During the pandemic, young people have had the opportunity to thrive, mature and grow in confidence. They experience stability and positive reinforcement in their lives. The lockdown period gave staff the time to cement their relationships with young people. Staff concentrate on nurturing young people's strengths and encourage their individuality. A young person said, 'The staff have shown and help me to understand what it means to be a mature positive person. It has been heart-warming for me how well they care about and support me.'

Young people have opportunities to explore their interests and talents. Examples include young people joining a football club, photography and music-making classes. This helps young people to develop self-esteem and grow in confidence.

Young people are engaged in online learning and enjoy informal learning opportunities. During the ongoing pandemic, young people have achieved functional skills certificates, for example in fire safety training. Young people's ambitions for the coming year include attending college for a beauty therapy course and to achieve a place in a mainstream school.

Young people are supported to maintain relationships with those who are important to them, as set out in their individual care plans. Staff support young people to maintain face-to-face contact, and to make positive use of online technology when direct contact is not possible.

Young people lead healthy lifestyles. Their social, physical, emotional and mental health needs are understood and well met. A young person said, 'The most important thing for me is that the staff have helped me to understand and regulate my emotions. They have supported me to make sense of my feelings. I now speak more about my feelings and know I will only receive positive encouragement.'

All young people said there is always a positive atmosphere in the home. As a result, they are settled and feel comfortable discussing any issues or concerns with the staff team.

### **The safety of children**

Risks are identified and understood by the staff team. Effective risk management planning promotes the safety and well-being of young people. Young people spoke of how appreciative they are to be living in a stable and safe home.

Young people do not regularly go missing from the home. They have comprehensive individual support plans and risk assessments. However, these plans do not yet

include the active involvement of young people in their individual behaviour support plans.

The positive home environment has led to young people making positive changes in their behaviours. As a result, young people have developed more constructive behaviours. Staff manage any challenging behaviours well. Physical restraints have not been necessary, and the police have not been used to support staff or manage young people's behaviours.

Staff receive regular reflective supervision, guidance and training with a focus on safeguarding. They fully understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping young people safe. Young people are at the heart of their practice. Staff are proactive in finding out the young people's wishes and feelings and take prompt action to ensure the young people always feel listened to and supported.

### **Leaders and managers**

A strong and capable manager is leading and developing the home. The manager is pragmatic and realistic in his approach. A member of staff said, 'The manager is an active listener. He is transparent, and he is always open to developing new ideas that will benefit young people and the staff team.'

Staff spoken to all identified the positives in their work. They feel that they are being supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. The home has adapted well to the challenges of the pandemic and has continued to improve. Staff say managers are accessible and always available.

Managers ensure that the focus of care is placed firmly on young people's lives. Managers have a shared vision that ensures that all young people benefit from the best possible care and support.

The home uses an efficient and effective recording system that makes monitoring of the home comprehensive. This system refers to the quality standards and the Children's Homes Regulations. The manager maintains good oversight of all practice and uses reflection of any incidents to identify key areas of learning for staff.

The manager places importance on internal and external monitoring of the home and values the role this has on the continuous development of practice. The responsible individual provides good oversight of the home. However, the independent person's monthly reports fail to comment on the safeguarding of young people and the promotion of their welfare.

## 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
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—  children are effectively safeguarded; and  the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b))	5 February 2021

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents' supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19) Specifically that children are supported to contribute to and have a say in their support plans. Where any child expresses unhappiness with support plans, a record of the child's response must be recorded verbatim.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 2517054

**Registered provider:** Kennedy And Elliott Partnership LLP

**Registered provider address:** Abacus House, 14-18 Forest Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 1DX

**Responsible individual:** Delicia Louis

**Registered manager:** Trevor Elliott

## Inspector

Juanita Mayers, Social Care Inspector

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