

2583468

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned. It provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There have been up to three young people cared for at any one time since the home opened.

Visit dates: 16 to 17 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

The three young people living in this home are all very positive about the care and support they receive.

Staff provide consistent, nurturing care. Staff know the young people's histories well and understand how previous life experiences have affected their behaviours and needs. The guidance and advice provided by staff helps young people to make progress and reach their potential. A social worker reported that, 'Staff have a good understanding of [a young person] and are able to respond to her in a trauma-informed way, which makes her feel safe and listened to...She has made massive progress in the last few months.'

Staff provide young people with clear boundaries. As a result, young people have established good routines that support them to engage in education and develop life skills.

Young people have better health and well-being as a result of proactive care by staff and effective partnership working with specialist resources. One young person has caught up with essential health screening, including immunisations. As a result, a previously unknown health concern has been identified and assessed. Another young person has been supported through the transition to adult healthcare services, ensuring that her health needs continue to be identified and met.

Young people are encouraged to share their views and wishes. They contribute to their planning meetings and have been supported to influence decisions about their care. Young people use a range of methods to express their views. For example, at one planning meeting, a young person presented her views using a mind map.

Staff and young people use an outcome measurement tool to track progress and identify any emerging concerns. When there are differences between staff assessment and the young person's assessment of progress made, this is addressed through direct work with young people. This has increased young people's motivation and has resulted in improved behaviours and greater confidence.

The safety of children

Young people say that they feel safe in the home. They are encouraged to share concerns in a range of ways. Appropriate procedures have been followed and have concluded in a timely way when concerns have been raised by young people.

There has been one incident of peer conflict. This was robustly responded to and staff consulted with relevant services. Effective mediation was arranged. This achieved a resolution.

One young person did not settle in the home. There were increasing concerns as a result of emerging behaviours and information about the level of risk from outside

the home. The manager requested a review of the young person's care arrangements and the young person moved to a more appropriate placement.

Overall, there has been a low number of safeguarding incidents. Young people have reduced self-harming behaviours and gone missing less frequently since moving into the home.

Risk assessment and behaviour management plans provide helpful advice to staff, based on each young person's needs. Staff identify triggers to behaviours, anticipate risk and respond effectively to emerging risks and behaviours. Effective information sharing helps to keep young people safe.

A recommendation is made that the home manager and staff receive additional training and information regarding procedures and guidance on safeguarding vulnerable adults. This would support staff and managers to confidently use the relevant procedures as young people living at the home move into adulthood.

Leaders and managers

The home has an experienced manager who is ambitious for the young people and sets high standards. Staff are positive about the ethos of the leadership team, as well as the support and supervision provided by the manager.

There is effective external and internal monitoring of the quality of care. The manager has made an accurate assessment of the strengths of the team and areas for development.

Staff benefit from training and development opportunities that ensure they can provide good-quality care. This has included training from specialist resources to meet specific needs. The team knows the progress young people are making and understands where there are barriers to progress. When there have been setbacks, the manager and staff reflect on this, learn lessons, seek advice and implement changes.

There is evidence of effective collaborative working and of the manager escalating concerns where there has been delay in progressing young people's plans.

There have been challenges to practice as a result of restrictions related to COVID-19. Staff have clear, up-to-date, COVID-19 guidance. Staff have been creative in ensuring that young people maintain relationships with friends and family and participate in activities whenever possible. Staff have ensured that young people have maintained education arrangements.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a young person may be at risk of harm. The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed and recorded in the home's workforce plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)

This is with particular reference to ensuring that training and information are provided to managers and staff to enhance their understanding of the procedures and practice for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2583468

Registered provider: Watermead Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Suite 135, 1 Hanley Street, Nottingham, Nottingham NG1 5BL

Responsible individual: Tamsin White

Registered manager: Sharon Smith

Inspector

Cathey Moriarty, Social Care Inspector

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