

1258894

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It provides care and accommodation for up to six children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There have been up to three children cared for in the home at any one time since the last inspection.

**Visit dates:** 9 to 10 December 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 3 September 2019

**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**

Children in the home have a range of complex needs and vulnerabilities. For some of the children, this is the first time they have been looked after away from their home and family. Staff help children to settle and support them to build relationships with staff and professionals. Staff also help children to maintain relationships with family and friends when this is assessed to be safe and appropriate.

Some of the children have difficulties engaging with education. Staff ensure that the arrangements for education support children to overcome barriers to learning and develop confidence. Staff use education plans to support improvement in children's communication skills and attainment.

Children benefit from good routines and clear expectations about behaviour. They develop life skills, including learning to cook, looking after their rooms and budgeting the range of allowances they receive. Children respond to incentives and positive reinforcement from staff.

Home managers are very aware of managing the risk of COVID-19 in the home and they support children to manage these risks when they are in the community. They regularly discuss new information shared by public health in children's meetings, and they explain national and local restrictions.

There are measures in the home to reduce the risk of infection. Children say that they understand why staff regularly remind them to keep themselves safe.

Children's health needs are identified and monitored. Staff take them to relevant health appointments. However, for one child, records evidence that staff were not monitoring that he had a daily balanced diet. A recommendation is made for staff and managers to review information about children's choices, ensure staff are working to influence those choices and provide a healthy and balanced diet for all children in the home.

## **The safety of children**

The manager is experienced in safeguarding children. He is proactive in escalating concerns to relevant professionals about emerging risks to children. Children have detailed risk- and behaviour-management plans in place. These plans include clear, succinct advice for staff to respond effectively to behaviours to keep children safe.

A small number of physical restraints have been undertaken by staff, which evidences that staff are using distraction and calming strategies effectively with children.

There have been some incidents of children not returning to the home at the times agreed in their plans. Staff follow missing-from-care procedures. They regularly call children to monitor their welfare when they are away from the home. If children are

late returning, staff will look for them prior to reporting them as being missing from care to the police, in line with their individual risk assessments. Children who have a history of going missing in the community have significantly reduced these concerns after moving into this home.

There have been very few complaints from children. Staff listen to children and respond to their views and concerns.

Staff have received a range of safeguarding training and are aware of the risks to children in the community. They undertake direct work with children to raise their awareness. Staff contribute to multi-agency assessments and strategy meetings to agree plans that support children to keep themselves safe. Children say that they feel safe in the home and that they have staff they can speak to about their worries.

There have been concerns about a member of staff's conduct. A process commenced, and was concluded, in accordance with child protection procedures, prior to the current manager being in post. The manager has reviewed all the information and has undertaken a lessons-learned exercise that has been shared. Refresher training about safe care and the whistle-blowing policy has also been delivered to all staff.

### **Leaders and managers**

The manager is experienced, has relevant qualifications and has a proven track record as an effective leader. He is in the process of completing his application to be the registered manager.

The manager is aware of the strengths within the staff team, and he monitors and carefully manages staff who need to improve their performance.

Staff say they receive a good range of training and supervision that are supportive and challenging. The manager audits records of the direct work carried out with children and always provides feedback. This supports staff's development and focuses on change for children.

The manager and deputy are conscientious about monitoring the progress of children. They respond to recommendations by the independent visitor and are developing more effective internal monitoring systems.

Staff and managers are proactive in working with partners and the child's network to progress children's plans and contribute to assessments. They contact the police and social workers appropriately and escalate concerns when necessary.

Social workers are positive about how staff support children to settle, share information promptly and advocate about children's needs.

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

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that, in line with their individual health plans and the ethos of the home, children are offered advice, support and guidance on health and well-being to enhance and supplement that provided by their school. Staff should have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children to understand and, where necessary, work to change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being. This is with particular reference to influencing children to choose a healthy and balanced diet. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)

## **Children's home details**

**Unique reference number:** 1258894

**Registered provider:** Happy Children Home Limited

**Registered provider address:** West Walk House, 99 Princess Road East, Leicester LE1 7LF

**Responsible individual:** Ranjit Bains

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## **Inspector**

Cathey Moriarty, Social Care Inspector

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