

1256367

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to five children and young people with complex needs, which may include challenging behaviours and emotional needs.

Visit dates: 10 to 11 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 13 August 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 like living at the home, they feel settled and know that staff care about them. Children's photographs are displayed throughout the home. They are trusted to have pets as long as they can look after them. Children feel able to relax and like spending time with staff.

Staff are ambitious for children and know how to motivate them to achieve. After school or college, children look happy to see staff and will sometimes greet them with a hug. When children lose confidence in themselves, staff show empathy and take the time to listen to any worries that they may have.

Children understand the value of money, which is positive, however, children openly talk about the house budget and the existing financial framework that is in place. This can detract from the homely environment that staff are wanting to create. It is positive that children are taught independence skills, and most children know how to cook and how to wash their own clothes. However, some children have previously experienced a lack of unconditional nurture in their childhoods. In response to this emotional need, staff could do more to enhance the nurturing care that is being provided to children in the home.

The safety of children

The house is decorated well throughout, and children's bedrooms are personalised and spacious. However, one child has a wardrobe that is broken, and although a new wardrobe is on order, the wardrobe in the child's bedroom is rickety and potentially poses a hazard.

Children have excellent relationships with staff and trust them with any problems that they have. Staff enjoy spending time with children and they endeavour to keep children safe. Children like that staff 'check in' with them when they are out, and they understand why staff do this. As a result, children are more likely to answer these calls and be honest about their whereabouts and who they are meeting.

There are times throughout the day when one staff member will be lone working with up to four children. Most of the time this staffing ratio works well. However, on one occasion, a member of staff caring for the children alone became unwell and could not summon another member of staff quickly.

The house is on three floors. This makes supervision of the children more difficult, particularly if lone working. Children have been exposed to inappropriate behaviours from other children when staff have been out of sight and on a different floor. Managers need to take risks more seriously so that the children in the home can be better protected from harm.

Staff do not ask to check children's phones unless a significant new risk emerges. This is because managers presume that children will not agree to their phones being

checked. Staff need to be proactive and engage more with children to ensure that they are safe online.

Leaders and managers

Managers are visible within the home and children like spending time with them. When children make complaints, managers take these concerns seriously. When the children have been involved in serious incidents, the manager has been a good advocate and has worked meaningfully and productively with wider professionals.

Although the care provided to children is good, this is not represented in the records that are made for children. Records are not child friendly and are often minimal and routine based. Children are not encouraged to contribute to their records and the records are not meaningful for children.

A medication error occurred which involved a child receiving a double dose of their medication. Staff and managers were quick to ensure that the child was safe and additional training and monitoring has now been undertaken.

Staff are well supported by managers and they receive regular supervision and training.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been managed well by managers and staff, who employed a common-sense approach throughout. Consequently, the impact on children has been minimal.

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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health; 	18 January 2021

<p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to hazardous furniture needing to be removed immediately so that children are not exposed to any unnecessary risk.</p> <p>The level of staff supervision between floors is not currently keeping children safe. Risks need to be taken more seriously by managers, including revisiting staffing ratios, and house rules should be better enforced.</p>	
<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— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(d)(f))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the risks associated with staff lone working with high numbers of children.</p> <p>In addition, managers should ensure that children are not overly exposed to any in-house discussions about finances and budgets.</p>	<p>18 January 2021</p>
<p>The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child.</p> <p>(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f))</p>	<p>18 January 2021</p>

<p>This specifically relates to the need for children to be involved in contributing to their records, and to avoid the use of language that could be seen as institutionalised.</p>	
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Recommendations

- The registered manager should ensure that medication is administered, recorded and monitored in a way that protects children from harm. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1256367

Registered provider: Homes 2 Inspire Limited

Registered provider address: Shaw Trust House, 19 Elmfield Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 1LT

Responsible individual: Angela Muchatuta

Registered manager: Steven Brown

Inspector

Andi Lilley-Tams, Social Care Inspector

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