

SC052946

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people who have experienced abuse, trauma and/or neglect, and present with a range of complex needs and behaviours.

The manager has been registered since May 2018.

At the time of this visit, all five children were living at this home in emergency placements and were in care for the first time.

Visit dates: 9 to 10 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 10 February 2020

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

Staff provide children and young people with individualised care and support of a high standard. Children and young people talked with great appreciation about their experiences of living in this home. One young person said that he feels loved in this home.

Staff are able to quickly form positive relationships with children and young people and gain their trust. One young person said he feels that the staff are not only his friends but like they are his family. Another young person said that staff never give up on young people and keep on encouraging them and giving them helpful advice.

Staff enable children and young people to be confident in expressing their views, feelings and wishes. Examples include an articulate letter that a young person wrote to the court judge, and deeply meaningful songs which have been creatively crafted by another young person about his life.

Staff promote children's and young people's safe relationships with their families and friends. This has continued throughout the pandemic through direct contact or online. Parents and other family members provided exceptionally positive feedback about the home.

Staff make sure that children and young people receive formal education and continue to develop their knowledge and skills in other ways, as well. One young person talked about how helpful it was for him to be told that there are different learning paths available. This rekindled the young person's interest in learning and confidence that he can be successful.

Children and young people engage in many activities that they enjoy. One young person said that he wakes up with a smile on his face every morning.

The safety of children

Staff have an excellent understanding of the vulnerabilities of children and young people. Staff complete specific, detailed assessments of the risk to children and young people of being exploited for sex, crime or other gains. Staff also assess the impact of COVID-19 related restrictions on children and young people, particularly on their emotional well-being, mental health and contact arrangements.

Enabling children and young people to understand the risks to their safety and to learn how to protect themselves underpins the home's effective safeguarding. Children and young people participate in safeguarding training and workshops, as well as their key-work sessions. They engage in honest discussions about a range of

topics. Recently, this has included COVID-19, sexual health, substance misuse, gangs, knife crime, violence, self-harm and anti-discrimination, such as the Black Lives Matter movement.

Staff work together with other professionals to safeguard children and young people. Children and young people have access to online specialist substance-misuse support and a psychologist recently visited the home.

The local safeguarding agencies make extensive contributions to the home's locality risk assessment. Staff have up-to-date knowledge about the area in which the home is situated. This enhances the quality of contextual safeguarding of children and young people.

The right balance of support and firm rules enables children and young people to experience a sense of order in their lives. This sense of order leads to their increased sense of security and safety. The incidents of challenging behaviour in the home are rare and when they occur, staff manage them well.

Staff support children and young people to build on their resilience and adopt safer behaviours. For example, one young person who had been transporting illegal substances said that he would not do it again. This young person has stopped going missing from care. He said, 'They put me on the right track. They helped me. I can improve myself. I can be the best I can be.'

Leaders and managers

Leaders and managers have continued to provide excellent leadership at a time of increased pressures and demands caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. While implementing a robust admissions procedure, they have responded positively to the increased need for emergency placements.

Staff make contributions to the local authority's assessments of the needs of children and young people, and the planning of their care. This has been particularly significant as children and young people have entered social care at the time of the pandemic and the social workers have had limited knowledge about them. Feedback from social workers, independent reviewing officers and legal guardians about the home is very positive.

The home has made a positive difference to the lives of many children and young people during the pandemic. Out of eight placements that ended since April 2020, six children and young people were reunited with their families. Another young person moved to independent accommodation and one received a custodial sentence for crimes that had been committed prior to him coming to live at the home.

The home's leaders, managers and staff are united in their child-centred practices. Regular supervisions, appraisals and team meetings provide good opportunities for staff to reflect on their practices and learn from each other. The continued formal

training online and face to face when the restrictions on social distancing permit, ensures that the staff have up-to-date knowledge and skills. One young person's family member described the staff in this home as empathetic, dedicated and committed to children.

The responsible individual monitors the home closely. However, on one occasion, when the registered manager used physical intervention, no evidence was available to show that this incident was appropriately scrutinised. The registered manager confirmed that the responsible individual debriefed everybody involved in the incident, including the young person, but no records of these discussions were made.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the records of physical interventions evidence independent scrutiny. This specifically relates to the incidents which involve the registered manager. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC052946

Registered provider: Care 2 Share 2 Limited

Registered provider address: 46 The Ridgeway, North Harrow, Harrow, Middlesex HA2 7QN

Responsible individual: Mehnaaz Chaudhary

Registered manager: Mirela Ajanovic

Inspectors

Seka Graovac, Social Care Inspector
Tolulope Sawyerr, Social Care Inspector

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