

1263766

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home is run by an experienced registered manager.

**Visit dates:** 17 to 18 December 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 4 December 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**

Young people make sufficient progress in relation to their individual starting points across aspects of their welfare, physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. Young people reported, 'It's good. The only thing that I don't like is them taking my phone off me at night times. Everything else is fine. The staff are really nice.'

Staff promote family time, and this enables young people to sustain their close relationships with the people who are most important to them. A family member reported, 'Very caring, friendly staff providing a nurturing and loving environment for young people.'

Young people experience good relationships with staff and they sustain their positive attachments. Staff provide young people with continuity of care, so that they have consistency and stability in their lives.

Young people are registered with the health services they need to promote their good health and well-being. Staff provide good advice about key health issues and encourage young people to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Young people make sufficient progress with their education and learning, and plans are in place to support their educational achievements. However, educational attendance levels require some improvement.

The home provides young people with a warm, comfortable and homely living environment.

## **The safety of children**

Young people's safety is consistently at the centre of staff's practice. Risks associated with young people are well known and understood by staff. The use of clear risk assessment and safe working practices promotes the safety of young people.

The use of restraint is rare, and if used at all, it is only used as a last resort to protect young people from harm. Staff challenge unacceptable behaviour appropriately and ensure the use of sanctions are balanced, fair and proportionate. Consequences are kept to an absolute minimum.

There have been no complaints and no concerns were raised by young people during this assurance visit.

Significant incidents are shared with the appropriate authorities to support and protect young people. Young people are kept safe and have a strong sense of personal safety.

Staff take appropriate action if young people are absent or go missing from the home. This includes actively looking for young people and maintaining regular phone contact with them.

When young people have gone missing, staff follow the home's procedures and work closely with the police to locate young people quickly and ensure their safe return. Missing person episodes are always followed up by an independent return home interview.

A police officer reported, 'It is my experience that staff provide an exceptional service. They are proactive when a child in their care goes missing and it is obvious from the meetings I attend they are passionate about their work.'

### **Leaders and managers**

The home is visited each month by an independent person to monitor the progress and experiences of young people. The registered manager said they found the external independent monitoring activities useful, insightful and informative.

The manager makes good use of the home's external monitoring activities to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home.

The registered manager has completed a lengthy quality of care review. However, the report is too descriptive, lacks evaluation and actions to secure the home's continuing development and improvement.

Young people benefit from a home that is managed efficiently and effectively. The registered manager demonstrates strong and effective leadership of the home's staff and operation.

The home has met the requirement and a recommendation from the last inspection.

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

#### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that children should be in full-time education whilst they are of compulsory school age, unless their personal education plan contained within the care plan or other relevant plan states otherwise. The home must aim to support full time attendance at school unless the child's relevant plan indicates this is not in their best interests. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.14)
- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that particular time and any areas of high risk to the children that the home is designed to care for, such as missing or exploitation. They will also consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and

conclusions. There is no expectation that the registered person will review the home against every part of the Quality Standards every six months – registered persons should use their professional judgement to decide which factors to focus on. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home’s care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next 6 months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. (‘Guide to the Children’s Home Regulations including the quality standards’, page 65, paragraph 15.4) This relates specifically to the improved evaluation and content of the review itself.

## **Children’s home details**

**Unique reference number:** 1263766

**Registered provider:** Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

**Registered provider address:** Town Hall, Market Street, Hyde, Tameside SK14 1AL

**Responsible individual:** Tracy Morris

**Registered manager:** Juliette Murphy

## **Inspector**

Anthony Kyem, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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