

SC032439

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide a short-break service for up to seven children. Some children may have physical disabilities, learning disabilities and/or sensory impairment. The local authority operates the home.

The registered manager has been in post since August 2020.

Visit dates: 10 to 11 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 28 October 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 receive good-quality care during their short breaks. Dedicated management and staff ensure that children enjoy a safe, caring environment. At this assurance visit, the inspector observed staff providing children with warm, nurturing and sensitive care.

Children achieve their full potential and try new and exciting experiences. Records fail to capture some of these great personal achievements. For example, role play supported one child to have a blood test without becoming distressed. Another child has improved their communication through therapeutic play sessions.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities when they come to stay. These include singing, dancing, baking and games. The home is very well resourced with sensory toys and play equipment in the garden. This assurance visit occurred in early December, and the house was festively decorated. A snow machine to greet the children on arrival from school caused great excitement.

Due to COVID-19, the annual Christmas party was cancelled. The manager ensured that children had an alternative experience. With some staff and volunteers, the manager dressed up as Father Christmas to tour the county delivering presents to every child in their home. A video was made to capture the success of this event.

The rooms on the ground floor of the house are accessible to all children. This offers access to many toys and activities, or quieter spaces if preferred. The bedrooms are upstairs. A faulty lift has caused some children to miss out on their stays. The manager transformed a ground-floor office into a temporary bedroom to enable a child to access the service. After a frustrating time of the lift regularly breaking down, a new lift will be installed in January 2021.

The safety of children

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to reduce COVID-19 risks. The manager has regular communication with the many schools that children attend. This level of monitoring identifies any increase in the risk of infection within schools, and appropriate action is taken.

Parents are very positive in their feedback on this service. They report that their children are happy to attend, that the children are safe here and that the staff 'do a brilliant job'. Effective communication is an additional protective factor for children.

Incidents of concern are low in number. Since the inspection in October 2019, there have not been any safeguarding referrals made to the designated officer or children's services. Staff are suitably trained to respond to concerns about the safety and well-being of children.

Restraint is rare, and is only used as a last resort to keep children safe. One intervention, in which a child's hands were moved so as to deter them from pulling an adult's hair, was managed correctly. However, the record of this intervention was not in the appropriate logbook.

Many new staff have been recruited since April 2020. Leaders and managers ensure that an effective selection and recruitment process safeguards children.

Leaders and managers

The manager was appointed in August 2020, and is now registered with Ofsted. In the four months that he has managed this short-break service, he has made significant improvements. For example, reviews of care practices in the home have resulted in a safer procedure for the administration of medication, improved care plans and greater consultation with children and their families.

The manager has introduced a newsletter and makes good use of social media. These methods of communication are well received by parents.

Staff welcome the manager's style, which is professional and child focused. Parents commented positively on the effective leadership of this home. Staff are positive in their attitude. They are supported well through supervision, training and a strong sense of teamwork. The manager instils a can-do attitude in his determination that children with disabilities should not be socially disadvantaged.

All requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection are met.

One requirement regarding a record of physical intervention is made following this visit, along with two recommendations to improve target-planning and record-keeping.

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
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.	11 December 2020

The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—

the name of the child
 details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure
 the date, time and location of the use of measure
 a description of the measure and its duration
 details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure
 the name of the person who used the measure, and of any other person present when the measure was used
 the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure
 a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person—

has spoken to the user about the measure
 has signed the record to confirm it is accurate.
 (Regulation 35 (1)(b) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)
 (b)(i)(ii))

This refers specifically to ensuring that any use of physical intervention is recorded in the correct manner.

Recommendations

- The registered person should support staff to be ambitious for every child in the home and to gain skills and experience that enable them to actively support each child to achieve their full potential. In particular, the targets for children should be meaningful and promote their personal development. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 52, paragraph 10.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home’s policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Children’s home details

Unique reference number: SC032439

Registered provider: Wiltshire Council

Registered provider address: Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Bythesea Road,
Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8LE

Responsible individual: Lucy Townsend

Registered manager: Kevin Derby

Inspector

Clare Davies, Social Care Inspector

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