

SC476512

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children and/or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is owned and operated by a private company.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2014.

**Visit dates:** 28 to 29 October 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 4 June 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 have positive relationships with staff. They say they are able to speak to staff about their feelings. One child said, 'Living here is good; it couldn't be better in any way.' Managers and staff have a nurturing approach towards the children. As a result, children are able to form trusting relationships with the adults around them.

Each child has a personal development plan in place to encourage them to learn independent living skills. These plans identify tasks and activities for the children to complete, and range from making hot drinks to cooking meals. This means that the children learn the skills they need as they move towards adulthood and independence.

Children's education is a priority for the home. Attendance at school for two of the children was a concern prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. A change of school and reduced class sizes have made a positive difference to their attendance. Staff supported one child to find employment opportunities and to enrol on a college course. The children learn the importance of education and make progress in this area of their development.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the children have kept in contact with their family by telephone. When the restrictions eased, face-to-face contact resumed. This means the children are able to maintain their relationships and connections with the people who are important to them.

Children take part in a variety of activities, including playing board games and go-karting. They also make good use of the spacious grounds around the home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff and children take regular walks to the nearby beach. A focus on fun activities helps the children to create positive memories.

## **The safety of children**

Children become increasingly safe because staff are able to identify and act on changes to children's behaviours. Staff use individual strategies, including increased staffing levels, to help to keep children safe when they need more support.

Children benefit from detailed support plans and risk assessments. These identify the children's known risks and include strategies for staff to use to help to keep children safe. When children have specific risks, including certain medical conditions, staff receive specialist training to enable them to respond to these risks. This helps to protect children from harm.

The home is clean and well maintained, and the grounds are well kept. However, there is no outside lighting, and in the winter months this may make entering or leaving the home in the dark dangerous.

Children complete key-work sessions with staff around keeping themselves safe online. They engage well in this work and are now more aware of online dangers and the steps to take to reduce potential risks to their safety.

### **Leaders and managers**

The registered manager is currently not working in the home and is due to leave the post shortly. A new manager has been recruited and is in day-to-day charge of the home and has introduced new routines. The children are benefiting from the new changes to the home. One child said, 'I like the changes; there are more boundaries now.'

Leaders and managers have introduced more streamlined filing systems, amended children's plans, and revised risk assessments. This means the staff are able to spend more time with the children. One child said, 'Staff spend less time in the office and more time with us.' This has a positive impact on the relationships the children have with staff.

Staff receive formal supervision. However, these sessions do not enable the staff to reflect on their practice. Consequently, staff do not have opportunities to discuss their personal development. The manager does not receive formal supervision. As a result, her practice and performance is not suitably monitored.

Monitoring systems do not support the manager to scrutinise the home effectively. These lack an evaluation of the care provided for children. As a result, necessary improvements to the home may be missed.

The quality of care report completed by the manager does not contain feedback and opinions from the children. As a result, this does not meet regulation. This was an issue at the previous inspection and the requirement made then is repeated.

## **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.

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Due date</b>
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—  understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;	30/11/2020

<p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child; and</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i)(ii))</p> <p>Specifically, provide suitable external lighting to enable children, staff and visitors to enter and exit the home safely.</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p>	30/11/2020
<p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c))</p>	30/11/2020

## Recommendations

- The registered person should actively seek scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from internal monitoring. (‘Guide to the children’s home regulations including the quality standards’, page 55, paragraph 10.24)

## Children’s home details

**Unique reference number:** SC476512

**Registered provider:** Highfield (North East) Limited

**Registered provider address:** 37 Emerald Street, Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Cleveland  
TS12 1EE

**Responsible individual:** William Ashton

**Registered manager:** Anthony Wood

## **Inspectors**

Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector  
Jane Titley, Social Care Inspector

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