

1280412

Apex Children's Services Limited

Monitoring visit

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home. The provider states in their home's statement of purpose that they provide care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

There is a registered manager in post. He registered with Ofsted in June 2020.

Inspection date: 3 March 2022

This monitoring visit

On 5 and 6 January 2022, Ofsted inspected the children's home and judged the home to be inadequate. The purpose of this visit was to monitor the provider's actions against three compliance notices under safeguarding of children, leadership and management, and medicines that were issued on 17 January 2022.

Three children continue to live in the home.

Safeguarding policies have been reviewed, updated and shared with all staff. The manager has developed a series of safeguarding quizzes for staff to complete to help him understand what knowledge the staff have and use this information to identify further areas for development. During supervision sessions with staff, the manager has discussed roles and responsibilities for everyone in regard to safeguarding matters. As a result, staff now fully understand the procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns.

The manager has sourced specific training by a specialist nurse, and this has been delivered to the staff team. Additionally, the staff have all received training in online safety. This has helped to give the staff a better understanding of children's needs and the risks to children in their care.

Risk assessments have been reviewed. They now provide clear strategies for staff to follow when children go missing from home and to monitor and review the use of

children's mobile phones. Staff talk confidently about the risks that children can face and the actions they need to take to keep children safe.

The manager has implemented new monitoring and reviewing systems that demonstrate better oversight on the quality of care provided to children. There are improved systems in place to monitor staff practice through supervision and the reporting and recording of incidents. This is helping the manager to reflect and make continuous improvements.

Medication systems are much improved, with new recording procedures when a child refuses medication. The manager has also introduced a more robust weekly medication auditing system. Additionally, staff have undertaken good-quality direct work with a child about the importance of taking medication.

There have been some changes in the rota to ensure that all relevant details are now included. Leaders have introduced a new on call system, which is accessible to staff, with clear guidance on who to contact for support. Staff were very receptive to the changes introduced.

The manager is notifying Ofsted of all serious incidents. This information allows the regulator to have better oversight on any safeguarding matters and see how effective the management of incidents has been.

Leaders have made improvements to the home environment. Each room has been tastefully decorated, and the damage to doors fixed. Additionally, new furniture and pictures have given the home a warm, nurturing environment for children to thrive in.

The provider has demonstrated at this visit that it has taken the necessary steps to ensure that the compliance notices issued under regulations 12, 13 and 23 are met.

Ofsted does not plan to take any further enforcement action. A further unannounced inspection will take place to continue to monitor the quality of care provided. The requirements will also be considered at this visit.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/01/2022	Full	Inadequate
27/01/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/01/2019	Full	Good

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 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; 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— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i))	30 March 2022
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction; ensure that each permanent appointment of an employee is subject to the satisfactory completion of a period of probation; and provide each employee with a job description outlining the employee's responsibilities. For the purposes of this regulation, "the appropriate person" is the registered person, an officer of HMCI, an officer of the local authority in whose area the home is located or a police officer. The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development;	30 March 2022

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (1)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b))	
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 the 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 ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and 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, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record	30 March 2022

confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))	30 March 2022
If there is a referral of a person working in the home pursuant to section 35 (Regulated activity providers: duty to refer) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006(1), the registered person must without delay notify— HMCI; the placing authority; and each other relevant person. The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or	30 March 2022

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.

A notification made under this regulation—

must include details of—

the matter;

the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and

any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter;

must be made or confirmed in writing.
(Regulation 40 (3)(a)(b)(c) (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)
(5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))

Specifically, the registered manager must ensure that all notifications contain a full and accurate account of serious incidents and what action is required in relation to reporting to external professionals.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that managers and staff are aware of the local offer that sets out the support available for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.4)
- The registered person should ensure that managers and staff encourage children to see the home's records as 'living documents', supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1280412

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Apex Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Apex Children's Services, 6 Tower Quays, Tower Road, Birkenhead, Cheshire CH41 1BP

Responsible individual: Barry Henry

Registered manager: Adam Ruse

Inspectors

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector
Rose Maddocks, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022