

1280412

Registered provider: Apex Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home. It provides care for up to four children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in June 2020.

Inspection date: 12 April 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

At the full inspection on 5 January 2022, serious shortfalls were identified at this children's home. Following the inspection, three compliance notices were issued, under regulation 12, the protection of children standard, regulation 13, the leadership and management standard, and regulation 23, medicines.

At a monitoring visit on 3 March 2022, inspectors found that the registered manager had taken the required action to address the shortfalls identified in the compliance notices.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, there were three children living in the home. The same three children were living there at the time of the last inspection.

Children living in this home feel happy and supported. Staff relationships with children are a strength of the home. The inspector observed warm and caring interactions between staff and the children. One child described the home as 'a family but different' and said that they felt cared for by the staff. Consequently, children are having a positive experience and they make progress.

Staff support children to enjoy their individual interests. Children take part in a variety of activities, including ice skating, going to Formula 1 events, and on trips to museums and theme parks. One child was supported to attend a residential trip for a charitable organisation of which he is an advocate. As a result, children feel valued and able to make a positive contribution.

Children are accessing education. Most children in the home are attending formal education and making good progress. For the child not in education, the manager has been proactive in finding a school place and staff implement a structured education plan. Children in this home recognise the importance of education and can achieve.

Staff promote good health for all the children. They register the children with the relevant health professionals. Staff support children to attend appointments, encourage children to try a varied diet and engage them in exercise. Due to this, the health needs of the children are all met and they can develop skills to meet their own needs in the future.

The staff team has high aspirations for the children in the home. Key-work sessions take place regularly with the children about their futures. Staff encourage the children through activities, such as sport, to make progress towards their chosen aspirations. As a result, children build confidence and have high expectations for themselves.

Children spend time with their families and those important to them. Staff advocate for the children to have appropriate time with their families and friends. Staff will support children going for visits or to attend occasions such as pantomimes together. Consequently, children can maintain and develop their sense of belonging.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children living in the home feel safe. Children told the inspector and other professionals that they feel safe and secure living in the home. Children know how

to raise a concern and are confident in doing so. As a result, children feel settled, secure and cared for.

There are individualised risk assessments in place for children, which contain clear strategies to reduce risk. Staff are knowledgeable about risks to children and know what their role is in implementing strategies. Consequently, children living in the home are being safeguarded effectively.

Incidents of children going missing are infrequent, however, there are clear missing-from-care plans in place for the children. They include details of close contacts of the children and clear strategies for staff to follow. Staff are knowledgeable of these strategies and understand how to keep children safe.

Training is up to date and specific to the needs of the children. Staff have completed training in online safety, child criminal exploitation, and recent refreshers in safeguarding. Staff's knowledge is tested and revisited by the management team to ensure that training is effective. Consequently, the team is skilled in keeping children safe.

Medication practices in this home are safe. There are clear procedures in place for storage of medication and staff follow them. The recording of administration of medication is clear, and the manager completes weekly audits. As a result, children are receiving their medication safely and in line with their prescriptions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, senior leaders have completed a full audit of the home and meetings have taken place with managers and staff. They have introduced a new responsible individual and implemented several changes to improve the quality of care provided and recording in the home. Managers now have peer support sessions and this has supported the positive changes made in the home.

This home is led by an appropriately qualified manager who has high aspirations for the children living in the home. Decisions made by the management team are child-centred and made in the best interests of the children living there. Consequently, the staff working in the home provide care according to the same ethos.

There are clear care plans in place for children. The plans accurately reflect the children's needs and the plans of the local authority. The manager regularly reviews the care plans and all staff members read and sign them. This results in the manager being able to evidence children's progress effectively.

The staff team and the manager benefit from regular supervision sessions and appraisals. These are structured and demonstrate room for reflection. Supervisions are also used as a space to revisit training and staff's knowledge. As a result, staff feel supported and the manager has good oversight of staff's strengths and areas for improvement.

The manager ensures that the home has a permanent staff team which meets the needs of the children. The team has a good gender balance and this is considered when arranging shifts. The manager operates a system always using shift leads who are qualified staff members, ensuring that at any time there is an experienced and skilled staff member available. As a result, the children are provided with good-quality and consistent care.

The manager carries out a location risk assessment for the home and this is reviewed regularly. However, the assessment lacks evaluation and does not identify strategies for managing any identified risks in the area. As a result, the assessment is ineffective.

The manager is aware of the home's strengths and areas for development. There is a clear plan in place for development of the team and areas to focus on as part of their continued learning. The manager has identified areas of the home environment to modernise and work is in progress.

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 review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and consider the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2))	25 May 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should complete a statement of purpose which demonstrates how the home provides care to meet the quality standards. This should include in the statement of purpose how staff working in the home are trained in physical restraint. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'.

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: Garry Jones

Registered manager: Adam Ruse

Inspector

Rose Maddocks, Social Care Inspector

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