

2525807

Registered provider: Absolute Children's Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

The registered provider has recently appointed a new responsible individual, and Ofsted is currently checking that this person has the relevant capacity, experience and skills to carry out the role.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2025. She is undertaking the level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 July 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 22 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/07/2024	Full	Good
03/05/2023	Full	Good
14/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
31/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this visit, four children were living at the home. All were seen and spoken to during the inspection.

Staff know the children well and provide them with person-centred, nurturing care based on a trauma-informed approach. This approach helps children to become very settled, and they are happy and progressing well.

Moves to the home are well planned. The manager carefully considers the needs of all the children and the skills of the staff, when undertaking assessments. As a result, children settle quickly when moving to the home.

Children's education is prioritised. Staff have advocated for children when their current placement has not suited their needs. As a result, changes to placements and timetables have been made so that children are able to attend education. Children are making good educational progress. One child, who previously struggled with any form of education, has now begun reading for pleasure. Another child's interest in horses has resulted in them gaining a college placement so that they can develop this interest into a career option.

Children's health is well managed. Staff make sure children attend their health appointments, and when there are concerns about a child's health, they make sure they are seen by a health professional. When needed, the manager is been proactive in requesting further tests so that all avenues to understand children's health needs are explored.

When children need additional support from professionals, staff make referrals to the relevant professionals such as counsellors, specialist advisory services and advocacy services.

Children are involved in all aspects of their care. Children personalise their rooms and make requests for things they would like and activities. Children help staff with food shopping, choosing foods they would like. Each month, children are asked to give their views and make suggestions via a feedback form. Children's views are taken seriously by staff and acted on. However, there is no formal feedback given. This means that it is not always clear to children as to what has been agreed and when things cannot be agreed and why.

Staff encourage children to take part in activities they enjoy. Children attend football training, and one is learning to horse ride. Staff take children to the cinema, shopping and bowling. There are plans to take children to a popular holiday park over the summer holidays, and staff are in the early stages of planning to take a child to Paris.

Professionals and families are complimentary about the care children receive at the home. They say that they have seen positive changes in children's behaviour and attitude and that children are happy and flourishing.

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

Staff keep children safe. Staff know the children well and are clear about the risks and strategies to manage risks to children.

Staff use a trauma-informed approach in all aspects of their work. Children's plans detail the importance of a nurturing approach, forming positive relationships, involving children in decisions and not using punitive responses to children's behaviours. This approach encourages positive behaviour, and there are few incidents.

Staff occasionally use consequences to help children learn from their behaviours. Consequences lead to positive changes in children's behaviours, and since the beginning of the year, staff have not needed to use consequences to address children's behaviours.

On one occasion, physical intervention was used to keep a child safe. Following this, staff reflected on the action they had taken and that due to the child's previous traumas, physical intervention was not the best approach. This reflection enabled staff to review the current plans, discuss with the child and formulate a new response based on training staff have received on trauma-informed approaches.

Children have access to mobile phones and online devices. The use of these is monitored, and when a concern arose about a child's online activity, staff took swift action to keep the child safe. They reported the concern to others that needed to know, including the police. Staff have worked with the child to help them understand online risks through reflective discussions and use of online resources. This has helped increase the child's knowledge in this area.

When children raise concerns about staff practice, the manager takes these seriously. She investigates and uses reflective practice sessions to help staff consider their approach to childcare. However, on one occasion, the manager did not see a concern as an allegation and as a result dealt with it as a practice issue. The home's safeguarding policy is not clear about what constitutes an allegation, and this means it is not always clear who concerns should be reported to.

The home's fire risk assessment has identified two fire doors which need repair or replacement. This work is scheduled and will include replacement of all the fire doors. However, the manager had not put in place a risk assessment so that staff are aware of the dangers of the two doors not closing in the event of the fire alarms being activated. In addition, staff prop doors open with plastic door wedges, which reduces their effectiveness in the event of a fire.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is new to the position but has worked at the home for many years. She is aspirational for children and has a clear vision for the care children should receive. Children like the manager, seek her out and want her to be involved in their day-to-day lives.

The manager has researched the effect of trauma in children. She has sourced support from external professionals who provide training and ongoing support to staff in trauma informed practice. This training has contributed to changes in the way staff undertake their role, how they interact and support children and how they make records about children. The knowledge from this learning is starting to be embedded in staff's practice. Staff acknowledge the difference it makes to their understanding of how children's experiences affect them. This greater understanding has contributed to staff changing their approaches to children's care and has resulted in more positive relationships with children and children making progress.

There is a stable staff team, and staff say they feel well supported by the manager. Staff receive regular supervision and training that supports their learning. Staff were complimentary about the manager, saying she has turned the home around since being in post.

The manager has her own monitoring systems that she uses to identify areas of improvement needed at the home. In addition, the independent visitor gives feedback on their findings, and the manager responds to these. However, the independent visitor does not do unannounced visits.

The manager has not always informed the regulator when there have been incidents that need to be notified under regulation 40. This affects the regulator's ability to have effective oversight of the home.

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, The 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
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) In particular, ensure that actions from fire risk assessments are completed promptly. If this is not possible, then a risk assessment should be in place to identify risks from fire doors that are faulty and action staff need to take. In addition, plastic door wedges should not be used.	2 July 2025
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which— is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— provide for liaison and co-operation with any local authority which are, or may be, making a child protection enquiry in relation to a child accommodated in the home; provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located;	15 August 2025

provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about past abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the alleged abuse or neglect occurred; provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response; describe the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect; and describe how and to whom staff are to report, without delay, any concern about abuse or neglect of a child. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)) In particular, ensure that the home's safeguarding policy has details of the procedures and action to take if an allegation is made against staff.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))	15 August 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. This should include the independent visitor, who visits under regulation 44, undertaking some of those visits unannounced. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted on. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

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: 2525807

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Absolute Children's Care Limited

Registered provider address: 142 West Malvern Road, Malvern, Worcestershire
WR14 4NJ

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Debbie Ward

Inspector

Debbie Bond, 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 looked after children, 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://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

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 2025