

2544217

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to accommodate five children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private organisation.

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. He has been in post since July 2019.

Visit dates: 2 to 3 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 6 January 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be 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 identified no serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children have warm and nurturing relationships with the adults who care for them. Children said that they are happy and have adults in the home whom they can talk to if they have worries or concerns.

Children have been well supported to maintain their contact with family and professionals during the lockdown period. Face-to-face contact has now resumed. Good use has been made of the available space to ensure that visits are safe.

All children engage in education, and this has continued through lockdown. Staff work creatively with education professionals to access appropriate education placements for the children. Additional equipment has been bought to allow children to develop hobbies and interests.

Staff have a good understanding of the children's needs. Additional support has been accessed from the therapist when necessary. This support has helped inform care plans and risk assessments.

The safety of children

Staff know how to keep children safe. A safeguarding concern was managed effectively and swiftly with measures put in place to safely manage the risk. However, some incident reports have not had timely management oversight. As a result, opportunities to improve behaviour management strategies might have been missed.

Levels of physical intervention reduce over time as children learn new strategies to manage their emotions. On one occasion, staff used a physical intervention technique that is not taught or authorised by the home. The manager responded appropriately to this and has taken steps to ensure that staff now only use approved techniques.

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and receive regular training. Staff understand the particular vulnerabilities of individual children. Effective risk assessment systems ensure that any known risks are minimised.

Leaders and managers

The manager is qualified and experienced. He provides strong leadership. Staff feel supported by the manager. They have regular supervision. New staff have particularly valued the support provided by the manager during their induction period.

The therapeutic model of care is not yet fully embedded in practice. Not all staff have received the necessary training in therapeutic techniques and theories used.

The independent visitor has undertaken virtual visits during the lockdown period. Children, staff and other professionals have been consulted, using telephone calls, questionnaires and emails. The manager has responded well to any issues raised.

The manager has positive relationships with other professionals. Feedback from professionals is consistently positive.

All except one of the previous requirements from the last inspection have been met. This relates to the fact that a number of staff have not yet received training in the home's therapeutic model of care. This requirement has been reset.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c))	31/03/2021
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ('the behaviour management policy') which sets out— (b) the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.	31/03/2021

The registered person must ensure that—

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

(Regulation 35(1)(b)(3)(b)(i)(ii))

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2544217

Registered provider: Absolute Childrens Services Ltd

Registered provider address: 98 Grove Street, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 8DU

Responsible individual: Derrell Crump

Registered manager: Shaun Scales

Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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