

2544217

Registered provider: Absolute Childrens Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care and accommodation for children aged between eight and 18 years of age. The home provides a therapeutic environment for the recovery and rehabilitation of children and young people who have suffered abuse, neglect or other trauma.

This is the home's first inspection following its registration in July 2019.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 January 2020

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them.	28/02/2020

(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(ix)(xii)(xiii)) The leadership and management standard is that the registered persons 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— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f))	28/02/2020
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(h))	28/02/2020
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;	28/02/2020

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(e))	
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— details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii)(iv)(v)(vii))	28/02/2020

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children are not yet receiving good enough care to support them to make or sustain good progress. Some children say that they feel happy at the home. However, another child feels uncared for. One child reported having limited people in the home who they can trust and confide in if they had a problem or concern.

Due to staffing issues, several different agency staff have been working in the home. This has resulted in children not knowing who will be caring for them and has caused a significant amount of instability. Furthermore, most of the staff working in the home do not have experience of working with children who have had traumatic life experiences. Most of the staff are also unqualified. Staff have not always had the skills necessary to respond well to challenging behaviours.

The home is not always a nurturing environment where children can grow in confidence and begin to address their previous experiences. Some inappropriate behaviours are left unchallenged by staff. This results in children becoming increasingly distressed.

Management and staff do not always consider the underlying causes of children's behaviour. Consequently, a therapeutic environment, as set out in the home's statement

of purpose, is not consistently being provided.

Despite these shortfalls, all children are receiving some form of education. Two children are in full-time, mainstream education. Managers and staff maintained their school placement when they moved to the home. This has provided the children with invaluable educational stability. Management and staff work closely with education providers to give children the best opportunity to learn and achieve qualifications.

Most children are engaging in the structured therapy that is provided by the home's therapist. This is proving beneficial for them.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Because staff are not consistently able to manage difficult behaviours effectively, they do not always provide children with a sense of safety. Management and staff are not always providing children with the high levels of emotional warmth, clear routines and boundaries that they need. Weaknesses in behaviour management mean that some children's behaviour escalates and becomes unsafe.

Physical intervention is used when necessary in response to unsafe behaviours. For one child, there has been a marked reduction in the need for physical intervention since they moved to the home. In the context of this child's history, this is significant progress. However, physical intervention records are not clear or detailed enough. They do not set out the specific technique used or the measures used to de-escalate behaviours. Records also fail to state how long some interventions have taken place for. Poor recording makes it difficult for managers to scrutinise and evaluate restraint practice.

Difficult relationships and name-calling between children have been ongoing issues in the home and were observed several times during the inspection. Children say that they are often unhappy as a result of name-calling by other children. Management and staff have not tackled this issue effectively.

Risk assessments outline the concerns relevant to the child. They are updated regularly but do not always provide clear, succinct and helpful information for staff about how risks should be managed.

There have not been any incidents of children going missing since this home opened. This means that children have become safer since moving to the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Systems to monitor the quality of care are not robust enough. Managers have failed to adequately address shortfalls in practice. The home's independent visitor highlighted concerns about practice in the home several months ago. However, managers failed to take the action that was required to address these shortfalls.

The registered manager has the capacity to create a strong and stable staff team. Although staff have sometimes been overwhelmed by the needs of the children they look after, they do feel supported by the management team. The manager and the senior management team are working hard to ensure that there is a permanent and stable staff team in place. New staff have now started work and are completing their induction period.

Directors of the home have also now recruited a new responsible individual to support and oversee the management of the home. All members of the senior management team recognise that improvement is needed before this new home can achieve the objectives set out in its statement of purpose. Despite the difficulties that the home has experienced in its initial period of operation, a realistic improvement plan is in place.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 2544217

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Absolute Childrens Services Ltd

Registered provider address: The Old Barn, Low Burnham, Epworth, Doncaster,
North Lincolnshire DN9 1DB

Responsible individual: Derrell Crump

Registered manager: Shaun Scales

Inspector

Davinia Lawton, social care inspector

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