

2544217

Registered provider: Absolute Children's Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private company and provides care for up to five children who may need support with their social and emotional needs.

The registered manager is suitably experienced and qualified and has been in post since June 2021.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 October 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 7 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/09/2023	Full	Good
03/05/2022	Full	Good
06/10/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
17/08/2021	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The home is a welcoming and cosy family environment for children. It is clean and well-presented. Children's bedrooms are personalised and suitably furnished to provide comfort and privacy. Children said they like living in their home and that they like the staff caring for them. Interactions between staff and children are warm and nurturing.

Children are making excellent progress with their health, education, independence and emotional well-being. Staff ensure that children can access specialist therapeutic services where required. All children are engaging positively with their education. Some children have been supported to re-engage with education following significant gaps in learning. One child has successfully passed all their GCSE examinations. One child is succeeding at college and is aspirational for their future career. Children are achieving academically and benefit from increasing self-esteem.

Children receive exceptional standards of care from staff. Observations of staff interacting with children showed that staff cherish and nurture the children. Staff appreciate that each child is unique. Staff provide tailored support that reflects the individual needs of each child. This helps children to flourish and develop their own personalities.

Children who leave the home stay in touch. One child was supported to learn to drive before leaving the home. Support to begin an apprenticeship has resulted in employment. These life events have been successful because of the care and support given to the child.

Staff encourage and support children's relationships with their families. They support time together with the aim of making their time an enjoyable event. Children are being provided with opportunities to socialise with peers and are encouraged to build and develop friendships.

Staff use research-based, creative interventions to support children with their life skills, emotional well-being and education. They use team meetings to discuss such strategies and reflect together on their effectiveness. The therapeutic approach is firmly embedded into practice, resulting in care which is always child centred.

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

Children are provided with a safe and secure home. Robust monitoring and maintenance systems in place help ensure children are kept safe. Staff know the children well and have a clear understanding of their individual vulnerabilities and risks. Children are well supervised by adults, who take account of their age and stage of development.

The members of the staff team help children to understand their risks and support them to take appropriate developmental risks as part of their independence. Children's risk assessments are comprehensive and individualised.

The members of the staff team have a solid understanding of their roles and responsibilities within safeguarding children. There are strong and effective links with local authorities and key safeguarding agencies. The manager ensures that staff working in the home undertake regular and comprehensive safeguarding training. She also ensures that, when required, bespoke training is provided to ensure staff are equipped to support and safeguard children effectively.

Physical intervention is rarely used, and only as a last resort to keep children safe. This is a testament to the staff's skills and the positive relationships they have with children. Staff are playful and use humour to de-escalate situations and the children respond well to this. This creates a calm environment and reduces anxiety for children. The consistent approach to care that staff provide means children know what to expect from the staff and this helps them feel safe.

The recruitment of staff is robust, to ensure unsuitable people are not employed to care for children. The manager ensures that there is ongoing review of employees' status through regular monitoring and review. This helps to safeguard children. Leaders and managers have excellent systems to ensure only those suitable to work with the children do so.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has successfully created a culture of high expectations for children. They are at the centre of everything in this home. The manager is focused on providing a family home for the children and helping them thrive and develop in all areas of their lives.

The manager is an excellent advocate for children. She has worked very hard with external agencies to ensure the right plans for children are in place. For example, there was a delay in the progress of one child having overnight stays with their family. She has continually advocated for this and put steps in place, such as purchasing a bed for the family to make sure this happened sooner for the child. This is an example of the management team going above and beyond to help children and their families.

The members of the management team have highly effective monitoring and auditing systems in place to ensure the home is managed effectively. They use these tools to assess the quality of care that children receive and to ensure the home is a safe and secure environment.

External professionals said children receive a high standard of care and communication is efficient and timely. They receive regular updates which are supplemented with photos of children. Children say they are happy in their home and talk positively about the adults caring for them. One child said, 'There is nothing they could have done better;

everything was bang on.' One professional said, 'This is the best children's home I have ever worked with.'

The manager has high aspirations for the children living in the home. To ensure that children reach their full potential, she has developed a staff team that is skilled and knowledgeable. Staff have extensive training and development opportunities. The manager uses research and reflective practice to develop her team. Regular, good-quality, reflective team meetings contribute to staff learning and development. The quality of supervision has at times been inconsistent and has not provided all staff the regular opportunity to reflect on their practice.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: 2544217

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Absolute Children's Services Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Derrell Crump

Registered manager: Taslima Shaikh

Inspector

Eleanor Quanbrough, Social Care Inspector

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