

2553536

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. The provider states in the home's statement of purpose that it provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

There is a registered manager in post. She registered with Ofsted in November 2019.

Inspection date: 5 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: 8 and 9 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: This children's home was judged inadequate at the full inspection on 8 and 9 February 2022. Further to the inspection, two compliance notices were issued under regulation 12, the protection of children standard, and regulation 13, the leadership and management standard.

As part of this inspection, the compliance notices were monitored. The provider has taken sufficient action to meet the compliance notices.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/02/2022	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This home is decorated to a high standard and children have personalised their bedrooms and the communal areas. The home provides a calm and welcoming environment. This helps children to feel safe and secure.

Children make progress from their starting points. Managers have worked hard to ensure that staff understand the importance of providing a nurturing, stable environment for the children to thrive in. The changes made have improved the relationships between children and staff.

Staff are considerate and sensitive to each child's wishes and feelings and promote family time. Children are encouraged to bring their friends to the home. Staff manage this well and carefully consider the views of all children in the home as part of the planning process. This encourages children to spend quality time with their family and friends.

Children make progress in their education because learning is central to the culture in the home. Staff have high aspirations for each child and advocate for them in education meetings. Staff challenge where it is necessary to ensure that children have the educational support that they need to reflect their individual needs.

Children engage in various activities that promote their talents, hobbies and interests. Children are encouraged to try new activities and this has enhanced their self-esteem and supported them to manage new situations. Children and staff are involved with charity work and have taken part in fundraising events.

Children are supported to lead healthy lifestyles. Their emotional and physical health needs are met. Regular multi-agency meetings are held for children to review the needs and progress of each child.

Children all spoke positively about their care and experiences, and the difference that living in the home has made in their lives. Children benefit from the family atmosphere in the home and the consistent staff team. Staff support the children to build on their life skills for their future and this is preparing them for adulthood.

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

Safeguarding practices in the home have improved and managers and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Children said that they feel safe living in the home and understand how to make a complaint. Individual risk assessments are followed by staff, and strategies are effective in ensuring that children are safe. Appropriate safety and monitoring measures are now in place to ensure that children are safeguarded.

Staff are trained in de-escalation techniques, and the interventions are effective in preventing incidents from escalating. Incident reports are appropriately detailed, and physical intervention is only used as a last resort to keep children safe.

Staff communicate well with other agencies and share information when necessary to ensure that children are safeguarded.

Allegations and complaints are now treated seriously. Steps are taken to ensure that all involved are supported through the process. Managers have recognised when improvements have been necessary and provided staff with additional training and support.

Staff strike an effective balance between the need for protection and enabling children to take reasonable risks in line with their age and development. Risk management plans have improved and are now updated promptly to include relevant information. As a result, all staff are aware of recent events.

Safe and effective recruitment processes help to safeguard children. New staff members are well informed and all staff receive regular supervision.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, senior leaders have completed a full audit of the home. Meetings were arranged with managers and staff to discuss the individual needs of each child, their care plan and any changes required to care practices. A new responsible individual has been identified. The changes introduced have ensured that all staff understand the ethos of the home, the recording systems in place and expectations of acceptable care practices.

The home is managed by a suitably qualified and experienced manager. The manager knows each of the children well and he has created a warm, nurturing environment and a positive ethos among the team. All staff feel supported and speak positively about the manager as being a knowledgeable, supportive and caring leader.

Children live in an effective and efficiently managed home. Every effort is made to ensure that children receive the best possible care. The manager works very well with professionals. Members of the staff team work well together and share ideas. This continuity of staffing has promoted children's attachments.

Staff routinely receive professional supervision, and regular team meetings are held to review practices in the home and the progress and experiences of children. All staff have engaged in a wide range of training that supports them to develop their knowledge of current issues affecting children in society. This has enabled staff to educate and empower children through developing their knowledge.

Case files are organised, up to date and easy to follow. Recording of incidents is detailed and thorough. The manager has worked hard to improve the monitoring

systems in place. As a result, she has clearer oversight of the events in the home. The manager is swift to respond to safeguarding matters by involving stakeholders. There is evidence of good communication and multi-agency working with schools, police and placing authorities. The manager has challenged on behalf of children, demonstrating good advocacy skills.

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

Recommendation

- Regulations 35–39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely while they remain in the home. Case records must be kept up to date and be signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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: 2553536

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Apex Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: 6 Tower Quays, Tower Road, Birkenhead,
Merseyside CH41 1BP

Responsible individual: Garry Jones

Registered manager: Lesley Grice

Inspectors

Jessica Higginson, Social Care Inspector
Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector

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