

2668789

Registered provider: Apsley Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to care for up to two children with social and emotional difficulties. The children's home is run by an experienced registered manager.

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

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 September 2024

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: 11 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/10/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are treated with dignity and respect and as a result warm and trusting relationships between children and staff have been built. Children engage well with keywork sessions. These key work sessions show how children are making progress.

Staff understand the importance of education for the children. One child, who had been out of education for several years recently sat their GCSE exams and is now attending college. Staff gave this child lots of encouragement which helped build the child's confidence and help them achieve. Another child, whilst not yet in a formalised education setting, is engaging well with a tutor who visits the home. This child is proud of the work she has recently completed and has requested to have more time with the tutor during the week.

The staff are proactive to seek out specialist services to support children's identified needs. Children's mental health needs are prioritised, and staff ensure that learning and advice from involved professionals is imbedded into care plans and approaches with children. For one child this has correlated with there being a reduction in incidents. Staff understand how to support children when they become very upset. This helps to reduce children's risk-taking behaviours and keep them safe.

Staff support the children to spend time with important people in their lives. Staff have supported one child to reconnect with a family member, this is something that the child really values. Staff understand that this offers children a sense of belonging and is important for their identity and future independence away from the home.

Children live in a comfortable environment, but some areas of the home do not yet have a homely feel. The manager has plans in place to redecorate and has consulted children on what their preferences would be. The children's bedrooms are not maintained to a high standard and some bedroom furniture was broken. Staff need to offer support to children to ensure their bedrooms are kept to an acceptable standard. The manager must ensure that damaged furniture is replaced in a timely way.

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

Children understand how to make a complaint and feel confident to raise their concerns with staff. Where complaints are made the manager is proactive to review current practice and adapt this where possible. This ensures that children feel listened to and that their concerns are taken seriously by staff.

Children do go missing from the home, but staff respond effectively to manage these incidents. Children have in place clear missing protocols which set out the steps for staff to follow, these are well understood by the team. Children are spoken to by staff when

they return to the home. Children are supported to understand the risks of this behaviour. As a result, there has been a reduction in missing incidents for one child.

When significant incidents occur at the home these are managed well by staff and appropriately notified to Ofsted. Recordings of incidents are generally thorough but physical intervention records were less clear.

Staff respond quickly to concerns of self-harm and ensure that measures are in place to keep children safe, such as close monitoring. Staff understand how to help children to feel calm and de-escalate incidents. Staff have not consistently sought medical advice following self-harm and must remain proactive to do this even when the children appear well.

The registered person explores allegations against staff thoroughly. Information is appropriately shared with correct professionals. However, follow ups with children are not always recorded. As a result, it is not clear if children have been informed of the outcome of investigations.

There have been several mistakes in the administration of medication. Management have implemented changes in recording and guidance to address this. Targeted discussions with staff around the importance and expectation of clear recording is improving practice around the management of medications in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by a dynamic management team. Managers understand the strengths and vulnerabilities of the home and have planned effectively to drive up practice. The manager's commitment to the children and staff has resulted in a more settled period at the home.

Staff feel well supported and enjoy working at the home. Staff are provided with regular and reflective supervision. This enables staff to give thought to their practice, and therefore provide better care for the children. The manager does not yet ensure that supervision is consistent across all the team so that all staff benefit from in-depth discussions.

The home is appropriately staffed. Staff are supported to access induction and training which informs their practice. There are some identified gaps in the mandatory training for some staff, although appropriate plans are in place to ensure the completion of this moving forward.

The manager understands the importance of safer recruitment processes within the home. Appropriate references are sought and verified. The manager has not however ensured that all necessary efforts have been made to verify why staff have left previous positions where they have worked with children or vulnerable adults. This means the manager cannot be fully assured that only appropriate staff are working within the home.

The manager has good oversight and understanding of the home. There is not however an imbedded auditing process which assists the manager to understand patterns of incidents or behaviours. There is a missed opportunity to reflect on areas of development or celebrate the impact of care within the home. The manager identifies this as an area in need of improvement.

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
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to ensuring that the staff help children to keep their bedrooms clean and tidy and that broken furniture is replaced in a timely way.	11 October 2024
The registered person may permit an individual to start work at the home despite the fact that the requirement in paragraph (3)(d) has not been met if— the registered person has taken all reasonable steps to obtain full information about each of the matters in Schedule 2 in respect of the individual, but the enquiries in relation to any of the matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2 are incomplete; full and satisfactory information in respect of the individual has been obtained in relation to the matters in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 2;	11 October 2024

the registered person considers that the circumstances are exceptional; and

the registered person ensures that the individual is appropriately supervised while carrying out the individual's duties, pending receipt of any outstanding information on the matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2, which is then considered satisfactory by the registered person.

The registered person must take reasonable steps to ensure that any individual who is working at the home and who does not fall within paragraph (2)(a) and (b) is appropriately supervised while carrying out the individual's duties. (Regulation 32 (7)(a)(b)(c)(d)(8))

This specifically relates to the registered person verifying the reasons why staff have left previous employments where they have worked with children or vulnerable adults.

Recommendations

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. In particular considering if a child require medical attention following incidents of self-harm. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- 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. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Particularly the use of physical intervention. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way

that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2668789

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Apsley Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 10 Valentine Place, Stanground South, Peterborough
PE2 8WG

Responsible individual: Abel Changa

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Louise Copping, social care inspector
Jess Baines, social care inspector

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