

2696593

Registered provider: Absolute Children's Services Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and run by a private organisation. It provides care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. Three children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2022 and is suitably qualified.

Inspection date: 14 September 2023

Date of last inspection: 25 April 2023

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

Staff spend time getting to know and understand the children. This means the children enjoy positive relationships with staff. This helps the children make progress in all areas of their lives.

Staff support children during times when they experience difficulties in their peer relationships. The registered manager holds restorative discussions between children. These discussions support the children's understanding around behaviours and how to treat others with respect.

The children's health and well-being are met by staff who understand their individual needs. Children are able to access support with their emotions from the home's psychologist. They benefit from this clinical input.

Children enjoy participating in a variety of social activities, a holiday by the coast, going bowling and having 'pamper' sessions. They are also encouraged to develop active hobbies and interests, such as horse-riding and attending a local gym. Children also have free time to socialise with their friends.

Staff support children to attend school, and some children access one-to-one tutoring in the home. Staff support children to overcome any potential barriers to education by encouraging them to talk about their worries and offering incentives to help progress their education plans.

Children are provided with opportunities to share their wishes and any concerns during individual discussions and weekly children's meetings. Staff remind children of how to make a complaint, and children are aware of advocacy support. The registered manager is revisiting this to strengthen the children's understanding.

The safety of children

Children said they have trusted staff who they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns.

On occasion, staff have physically intervened to keep children safe and prevent injury to others. The interventions are proportionate, and children and staff are given the opportunity to understand and reflect on events.

Staff search for children when they go missing from the home and are aware of the procedures for notifying and reporting incidents. The registered manager is aware of

the importance of children having someone independent to talk to about the reasons they went missing. The registered manager escalates appropriately to the local authority when this support is not consistently provided for children.

Staff support children to help them understand risks associated with going missing from home, exploitation, internet safety and grooming. This helps to keep children safer.

Individual behavioural support plans are detailed and offer staff clear guidance to follow. The overall use of consequences is appropriate, with suitable management oversight to assess whether they are used appropriately. However, on one occasion, a consequence was used which meant the child had several losses imposed, including losing time with a friend and an activity. On this occasion, the consequence was overly punitive.

Children's risk assessments are clear and updated following any significant incidents. This helps staff to understand children's associated risks and offer children support to reduce these. However, one incident has not been clearly recorded, and it is unclear whether risks were understood by staff in this instance or what actions were taken. This means the registered manager does not have the necessary information to monitor the effectiveness of staff responses or consider whether follow-up actions are needed to safeguard children effectively.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The home is run by a registered manager who is passionate and visible in the home with a hands-on approach. The home is now appropriately staffed to meet children's needs.

The registered manager has audit tools in place that support monitoring the progress of the quality of care provided to the children. The registered manager is proactive in supporting and challenging staff to ensure they offer the children consistency and continuity of care.

Staff feel supported by the registered manager. One member of staff said, 'The manager is amazing.' Staff are feeling confident as a team and benefit from regular support and team meetings.

The registered manager ensures that the home is very well maintained and well presented.

The registered manager has been proactive in progressing all the requirements from the previous inspection. Staff have been offered additional training, which has given them confidence and additional strategies to support children. However, some staff are not clear about their roles and responsibilities in understanding the importance of accurately recording incidents to reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/04/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v))	27 October 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used are restorative in nature and proportionate and that they support children to make reparation without the loss of multiple rights. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraphs 9.36 and 9.38)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2696593

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Absolute Children's Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Derrell Crump

Registered manager: Candiece Brown

Inspector

Gina Lightfoot, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023