

2696593

Registered provider: Absolute Childrens Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company owns and manages this children's home. It provides care for up to four children who may have social and/or emotional difficulties. There were four children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

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

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 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	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 25 April 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
25/04/2023	Full	requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Positive relationships between the staff and children are evident in practice and within the documented key-worker sessions. Each child can identify staff in the home who they trust and enjoy spending time with. One child has described the home as her 'forever home'. Recent written feedback from the children was observed to be largely positive. One child wrote about her key workers and said 'they are both amazing and they try their very best to support me'.

Children have access to a range of activities of their choosing and there is evidence of these opportunities in the children's memory books and within the children's files. Some of these activities are focused on and promote the children's education and health. Staff are active in seeking opportunities for the children to engage in a range of activities to further promote the children's overall well-being.

Children are encouraged by staff to share their wishes and feelings in a range of ways. Children are listened to and given a voice in matters regarding their own lives. Staff act on children's wishes and feelings, where appropriate and safe to do so. When this is not possible, staff spend time with each child to sensitively explain why they cannot act on these.

The children's guide is accessible to the current age range of children in the home and contains important information, including how to complain. There has been one complaint since the assurance inspection. This was from one of the children who wanted to understand more about their entry into care. The registered manager contacted the child's social worker promptly to request further information for the child, which was followed up in a key-working session. Plans were made for the child to start life-story work with the in-house therapist. The child also received a written response and was able to sign the complaint documents to say whether they felt that the issue was resolved. This provides children with the knowledge that their complaints and concerns are taken seriously.

Children are making progress in relation to their starting points. One professional stated that one of the children has 'flourished' since moving into the home. They have proportioned much of their success to the staff and management in assisting the child to become more confident and progress in their learning and development. Professionals who are known to the children are positive about the progress that children are making and the quality of care they receive.

The registered manager supports the children to attend education and is a strong advocate for them. Children are adhering to their timetables and making progress in their education with support from the staff. The staff are proactive in advocating for the children to ensure that they have access to their learning and are supported to achieve their goals.

Children are in good health. The registered manager ensures that the children are registered with health services and are routinely seen. Health documents are up to date and easily accessible to the staff in children's files.

The home has an in-house therapist who supports three of the children with direct sessions in the home. The children actively choose to take part in the therapy offered. The model of care used by the therapist is also used by the staff to ensure a consistent approach to understanding and meeting the children's emotional needs. The therapist has noted good emotional progress for these children.

Children are provided with memory books that contain pictures of special moments and activities in the home, which provide them with a sense of belonging. These books are put together in a way that is personalised for the child. They not only include a record of activities but also what they have achieved while living at the home. This means that the children have a personalised record that is just for them.

The home environment is maintained to a high standard. Repairs or maintenance are quickly completed to provide a warm home for children to live in. However, there are areas that require attention to maintain the high standards and continue to provide a homely environment.

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

Children are appropriately safeguarded in the home. Staff understand the risks for each child and how to manage these appropriately with assistance from robust and updated risk assessments. Team meetings are held regularly, and the safety of the children is discussed as a standing item. Staff are required to read and sign any updates in the child's risk assessments and team meeting minutes to ensure that they are up to date with relevant information regarding any safeguarding issues.

Children receive support to understand and manage their behaviours through key-working sessions, which are evidenced in their files. Children are encouraged to reflect on their behaviours, and restorative processes are supported by staff. Children understand the outcomes of their actions and accept them as part of the restorative approach.

Positive behaviour is consistently promoted, and this is evidenced through a reward system that is in place at the home. Children can earn additional rewards for meeting specific goals, such as improvements in education. There is a restorative approach to behaviour, and consequences are agreed and reviewed by the manager. The manager explains the rationale regarding fairness and proportionality and often includes a way for the child to prevent the consequence and make amends.

When a child is missing from home, the registered manager ensures that the missing-from-home procedures are followed. Staff respond quickly and appropriately to any missing episodes to ensure the safety of the child. Return-home interviews are

requested and an independent-person visit is offered. The recording of missing-from-home episodes is detailed, ensures accountability from staff, and includes management oversight. The lessons learned from missing episodes and patterns of behaviour are well understood by staff, and the actions taken continue to enhance safety.

Physical intervention, when required, is completed by knowledgeable and trained staff. Management oversight is evident on the records and debriefs are held with the staff and child. The document used to record restraints states that the staff involved in the restraint should not carry out the debrief with the child. However, it has been seen in all restraint incident records that this has not been adhered to.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is highly ambitious for children. This positive approach to care has created a shared culture in the home across the staff team. One staff member said that the registered manager is 'inspirational' and supports them and the staff team in providing the quality of care needed to improve the lives of the children.

Staff speak highly of the registered manager. They feel valued and respected in their role. One staff member said 'the support has been amazing', and another member of staff said that the registered manager is 'always available'.

Children benefit from exceptional care from staff who feel well supported in their role. The ethos in the home is one of high expectations and aspirations for all the children. The registered manager is clear that staff do what is needed to support children in staying safe and achieving their goals. Written records are detailed and include manager oversight that is reflective. Oversight always involves the views of children and identifies learning or action to inform future practice.

The therapist provides group supervision and training on the models of care in direct correlation to the children. This ensures that staff have the knowledge and understanding to inform the appropriate responses to children. The staff utilise relevant research to inform their practice and gain input from professionals within the field. This further enhances the lives and experiences of the children in the home.

The manager ensures that staff have access to high-quality training opportunities in line with the children's needs. The manager discussed keeping 'learning alive' to reflect on practice on a daily basis. Individual staff member's learning styles are taken into account during their induction period to ensure that they get the most from their training and that any barriers to learning are addressed. This ensures that children are supported by highly trained and knowledgeable staff.

The registered manager is knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the home. They ensure that children receive high-quality care, and challenge staff where this quality is not evident or sustained. There is a clear development plan for the home that addresses the identified weaknesses to continue to enhance the standard of care in the future.

Staff receive regular supervision that is child-focused and reflective. The registered manager and deputy manager support staff to reflect on the care that children receive and on their practice. The written records recognise good practice.

The staff work with numerous professionals to understand and meet the children's needs. The manager is proactive in keeping agencies informed of any changes in the children's lives and will implement professional challenge in the best interests of the children. This promotes a multi-agency approach to children's care.

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

Recommendations

- Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations; however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Records of restraint must be kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.59)

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: 2696593

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Absolute Childrens Services Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Derrell Crump

Registered manager: Candiece Brown

Inspectors

Kate Jackson, Social Care Inspector
Ladean Wilson, Social Care Inspector

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