

SC033268

Registered provider: Appletree Treatment Centre Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider. The home provides care for up to 12 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2024.

At the time of this inspection, seven children were living in the home. The inspectors spoke with all the children.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 August 2025

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 16 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/12/2024	Full	Good
27/08/2024	Full	Inadequate
04/09/2023	Full	Good
22/11/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children say that they enjoy living in the home. A committed, consistent team of nurturing staff helps them to make progress, and children build effective relationships with staff as a result.

Staff understand the needs of each child and know what is important to them. Staff use visual clues such as 'WOW moment' certificates to ensure that children feel valued and can see the progress they make. Children are clear that they know who they can talk to if they are worried about anything.

The children attend the provider's own school, which is on site, and they all consistently attend. There is good communication between the two provisions, and both work together to ensure the safety of the children on site.

Staff recognise the need for the children to maintain relationships with friends and family, and they support family time in a variety of ways. This helps children to stay connected to their family and friends despite some children now living a long way from those people who are important to them.

The management team plans and manages children's transitions to and from the home effectively. Information about the child is captured in a decision-making document that includes identified risks. However, leaders and managers do not evaluate each child's risks against those of the child joining the home. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that risks are minimised when children come to live at the home.

Care plans highlight the child's journey throughout their time living in the home and include their progress and targets to work towards. They cross-reference to the 'Time with' documents where staff record the work that they undertake with the child in relation to their targets. However, the language used on occasion is jargonistic and unhelpful to children. Staff also do not always clearly record any actions or next steps.

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

Children say that they feel safe living in the home. Staff give children advice about general safety issues as well as those specific to individual children.

Children's behaviour, when they are expressing strong emotions, sometimes leads to them being held to help them feel less overwhelmed. Staff use de-escalation and distraction or are guided away from situations to help children before they need to be held. Records demonstrate that this is needed most often when children first

come to live at the home, and they show a reduction over time the need to be held for all children.

Children rarely go missing from the home, but staff are clear about the actions that they would take if this were to occur.

Risk assessments include clear strategies to help minimise risk, but staff do not always update them in line with practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager has submitted his application to voluntarily cancel his registration and is not currently working in the home. The deputy is acting as manager and led the inspection, supported by a manager from another of the provider's homes. Staff are aware of the changes in place and clearly say that they feel supported by the deputy, who they describe as approachable and knowledgeable.

Staff benefit from thorough inductions, which develop their understanding of the children and what is needed to run the home effectively. Inductions also include staff accessing a range of training. This contributes to children receiving care from suitably skilled and experienced staff.

Staff receive regular practice-related supervision and attend team meetings. Both include detailed discussions about children. The managers ensure that there are discussions to reflect on incidents and the children's needs. However, gaps were identified in the frequency of supervisions, and some notes could not be found during the inspection.

Safe practice is followed when recruiting staff. However, leaders and managers have not always had good oversight of the information provided during the process. This meant that essential information about a staff member's suitability was not available during the inspection.

A serious incident was not notified to Ofsted as required. This prevents the regulator from ensuring that all available actions take place to safeguard children. When this was raised during the inspection, the notification was submitted the same day.

The staff team works well with other professionals, who report that they are kept updated with relevant information and the progress that their child makes. One professional said, 'This is the most settled that [name of child] has been.'

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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(a)(d))	1 September 2025
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, ensure that management oversight includes identifying shortfalls in risk assessments.	1 September 2025
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—	15 August 2025

a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a))	30 September 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff receive supervision in line with the relevant policy and that notes are made and available. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 60, paragraph 13.3)
- The registered person should ensure that records do not include jargonistic language and give a complete picture of issues raised and the responses of staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, 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: SC033268

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Appletree Treatment Centre Limited

Registered provider address: Meathop Park, Meathop, Cumbria LA11 6RF

Responsible individual: Rowan Knapton

Registered manager: Jonathan Close

Inspectors

Sue Atkinson-Millmoor, Social Care Inspector
Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector

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