

SC408714

Registered provider: Able Health Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and is registered to look after six children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There are education facilities in the grounds of the home.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 September 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 23 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Staff understand the children's complex needs and behaviours within the context of their therapeutic model.

- The children value the positive relationships that they develop with staff.
- The staff work with a consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist to provide a consistent approach to children’s emotional health.
- All of the children have memory folders, which are of an excellent standard.
- The children trust the staff and say that they feel safe.
- The children’s vulnerabilities are fully understood by staff.
- Health and safety in the home are well managed.
- The manager understands the progress that the children are making and is passionate in promoting their outcomes.

The children’s home’s areas for development:

- The home environment, including outside the home and the upstairs area, is not child friendly.
- Some of the files are overloaded with documents, and the documents have become torn.
- The independent visitor’s reports lack information and evaluation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/11/2016	Full	Good
18/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
07/12/2015	Full	Good

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, 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
<p>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 and use this understanding to deliver care that meets the children's needs and supports them to achieve their potential.</p> <p>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. (Regulation 6(1)(2)(c)(i))</p>	31/12/2017

Recommendations

- 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 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)
- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide individualised care that meets the children's specific needs.

Since the last inspection, some children have moved into the home in a planned way. The registered manager ensured that, for some children, their transition was carefully organised and gave the opportunity for visits and overnight stays before moving in. Staff have quickly got to know the new children. A social worker said, 'I feel like this is the most settled placement [the child] has had since I have worked with him. They [staff] want to work with him and they have a good holistic approach.' A parent commented,

'It's the first time in many years he has stability after having so many failed placements.'

The children value the positive relationships that they develop with staff. One child said, 'All staff are good at all different things, [staff name] fishing, [staff name] skate boarding, nothing should change.' The staff spend time with the children and develop a detailed understanding of their histories and needs. Staff encourage carefully assessed contact between the children and their families and friends when that is safe and in their best interests. At times, this involves staff taking the children considerable distances to facilitate contact, which promotes the children's sense of identity.

The children enjoy a wide range of activities. They have been to the biggest skate park in the country, football matches and Santa Pod. The staff encourage personal interests, for example police cadets. All of the children have memory folders which are of an excellent standard and include photographic evidence of achievements, birthday celebrations, holidays, activities and funny moments spent with staff. A fantastic photo of a child dressed in his police cadets uniform and looking very smart is just one example of how staff go above and beyond to enhance children's time spent in the home. The memory folders give the children great memories to take with them into adulthood.

All of the children have confidence in speaking in front of their peers at house meetings, which are held regularly. This gives children the opportunity to share their views on their day and what they will be doing in the evening. The meetings have proved successful and have resulted in the children influencing their free time, hobbies and activities.

Those children who previously refused education now attend school. Additionally, those children who had fragmented attendance now attend, with attendance rates exceeding their past educational attainment. This demonstrates that some children are starting to realise that their life chances can be improved through their education.

The children's health is well maintained through prompt registration with core health services such as the doctor, dentist and optician. The children have developed a better understanding of the importance of being healthy and of making good lifestyle choices.

The staff work with a consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist to provide a consistent approach to children's emotional health. The staff hold regular monthly meetings to look at trauma and developmental aspects and how those fit into the children's therapeutic care plans. The staff understand the value of reflective practice and nurture children in line with the model of care adopted by the organisation.

The children's files are of a good standard. They contain relevant documents and care plans that are up to date and describe each child's care needs. The plans are designed to support the staff to provide effective care. However, some of the files are overloaded with documents, and the documents have become torn. This could lead to documents becoming unreadable.

The ground floor of the home is adequately decorated and furnished. However, the children's bedrooms lack warmth, colour and personal touches. Bedrooms are tired in their appearance and lack accessories and matching furniture to suggest that these are children's bedrooms. The garden is very large; however, the children share their garden with the school, which does not give privacy for either the children who live at the home

or those attending the school. The environment outside the home and on the first floor is not child friendly.

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

The staff fully understand the children's vulnerabilities. Due to the age of the children and levels of supervision provided, risks associated with missing-from-home incidents or child sexual exploitation are minimised. Extensive risk assessments inform the staff of actions and approaches to be taken in order to respond to situations. This has led to a decrease in missing-from-home episodes and risk-taking behaviours.

The staff have been quick to adjust and reflect on their approaches to working with the children, in order to learn from incidents and de-escalate potential incidents far sooner. The number of physical restraints has reduced since the last full inspection. Incidents and sanctions are well thought through and creative, helping the children to fully understand the impact of their behaviour.

The staff manage conflict carefully and successfully. Consequently, the children grow in self-awareness, are able to self-regulate and develop empathy towards others. This helps them to maintain friendships.

The children trust the staff and say that they feel safe. The staff provide a high level of emotional support that, over time, results in children being able to articulate their feelings. Children's comments included, 'If anyone knows me and finds me, then I have someone here to protect me, but if it was at [name of another location] then I would not be safe.' Another child said 'Yes' to feeling safe, because, 'all the doors are locked, and staff would stop unwelcome people from coming in.'

Good staffing levels reduce the chances of bullying taking place. Bullying at the home is not an area of concern to the children. Boundaries are clear, coupled with consistent daily routines and close supervision, all of which provide the children with a level of security that they are comfortable with.

All members of staff spoken to have a good understanding of safeguarding practice. They are fully aware of their responsibility to protect children from abuse and they are able to describe reporting procedures confidently. Staff understand the roles of external agencies and report having confidence in their organisation's whistle-blowing policy. This helps to keep children safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has the necessary skills and experience to manage the home. He has completed the level 5 diploma in leadership and management in residential child care. He is child focused and oversees the admissions to the home, having undertaken rigorous impact risk assessments with input from the home's consultant. Children who are new to the home quickly settle. A child said, 'It feels just like home.'

The manager understands the progress that the children are making and is passionate in promoting their outcomes. This was echoed by an independent reviewing officer who spoke of how she was able to measure the progress of one of her children through the

reviewing process. She said, 'He [the child] has absolutely flourished in their care. He now contributes beautifully to his review. The communication from staff, especially his key worker, has been brilliant and staff have turned his behaviour around.'

The registered manager recognises the home's strengths and weaknesses. He ensures that there is a strong learning culture in the staff team. This is reflected in the staff members' willingness to not only learn from other professionals, but to regularly seek out training that will improve their care of children. The training is further enhanced by regular team meetings and staff supervision. Discussions are reflective in nature and centre on the progress of children. Experienced senior staff mentor newly appointed staff so that they feel well prepared to confidently manage children's risk-taking behaviour.

The management team and staff are fully committed to working with the consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist and placing social workers in order to meet the children's complex needs well. This approach is a strength of the manager and staff team. They are open to embracing the ideas and input into their work with children. The children benefit from the consistency in approach.

The manager monitors and evaluates the care effectively. He has good insight and knowledge of the children's starting points, histories, current needs and progress. He demonstrates sensitivity with regard to children's relationships with staff, and these are taken into account when planning shifts and rotas.

An independent visitor provides monthly monitoring reports. However, the reports lack information and evaluation, which means that the service is not monitored effectively, nor potential shortfalls identified.

The manager has met the requirement raised at the last inspection. However, following the recommendation raised at the last inspection, although the manager has made improvements to the arrangements for food storage, shortfalls remain in the decor and presentation of some areas of the home.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC408714

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Able Health Care Limited

Registered provider address: 45 Wolsey Road, Northwood Middlesex HA6 2ER

Responsible individual: Aruna Kukadia

Registered manager: Thomas Thurlow

Inspector

Cathy Russell, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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