

SC448209

Registered provider: Amberleigh Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This private home provides long-term specialist therapeutic care and education for up to 12 young males who have displayed inappropriate or harmful sexualised behaviours.

The home does not currently have a registered manager. A suitably experienced interim manager who has completed a level 5 qualification in leadership and management is in post. He has applied to be registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 August 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 6 September 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/09/2018	Full	Good
15/05/2018	Full	Inadequate
17/01/2018	Full	Inadequate
04/10/2017	Full	Inadequate

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff help each child to develop socially aware behaviour. (Regulation 11 (1)(b)(c)(2)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that group meetings provide young people with a safe and positive environment to explore their behaviours and relationships with peers.</p>	30/09/2019
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(i))</p>	30/09/2019
<p>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 and promotes their welfare.</p>	30/09/2019

<p>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))</p> <p>In particular, the interim manager will continue to develop leadership skills to promote staff development, reflection and embedding consistent practice.</p>	
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>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)(b)(2)(a))</p>	30/09/2019
<p>No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. (Regulation 19 (1))</p>	30/09/2019

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Young people's experiences and progress are mixed. The admission of some young people has unsettled the home and resulted in a number of challenging incidents. This has a negative impact on young people's day-to-day experiences. Young people reported that they have been subjected to racist and homophobic abuse from their peers. A young person told the inspector, 'It feels like the same young people control everyone else's lives. I don't think that I can be proud of this place [the home] anymore. It was good to begin with, but not anymore.'

Therapy and key-working sessions support young people to explore the context of their feelings and behaviours. However, this good practice is undermined by the poor management of young people's meetings. On several occasions, young people have openly challenged their peers' behaviours without any understanding of their previous trauma or abuse. This approach is intimidating and unsettling for young people. Records from these meetings show that young people are often upset, angry and disillusioned.

The on-site school building has been significantly redeveloped and refurbished. The learning environment is bright, child-centred and encourages young people to engage in their education. Attendance rates are excellent and young people make good progress from their starting points. Staff and teachers meet daily to share information. They hold high aspirations for young people and celebrate their education successes.

Staff encourage young people to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They use key-work sessions to help them to understand the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. As a result, one young person has lost a significant amount of weight. This has increased his self-esteem and confidence.

Young people enjoy a range of activities and enjoyable experiences. This includes trips to local parks, trampolining and holidays to the seaside. Staff support young people to develop hobbies and interests. Some young people attend a free running club. Another young person attends a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth group. These experiences support young people to meet new friends and feel part of their local community.

Staff support young people to develop their independence skills. A section of the home is used to promote independent living. Young people learn to cook, clean and budget. Recently, staff and young people jointly agreed to promote safe, additional mobile phone use and online activity. A young person has recently commenced his apprenticeship in maintenance at the home. This approach supports young people to prepare for their future.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Some young people display high levels of challenging behaviour in the home. During a recent incident, the interim manager did not put prompt and clear plans in place to keep young people safe. As a result, some young people went missing. Alleged events that took place while the young people were missing from the home are subject to an ongoing police investigation. In addition, although staff monitor young people during challenging incidents, this is sometimes not done closely enough. This does not fully protect young people.

Overall, young people's risk assessments are clear and up to date. They contain clear guidance for staff to manage risk. However, one young person's risk assessment did not contain information about an alleged incident of sexual behaviour with a peer. This means that young people do not have all aspects of their risks assessed.

Some young people told the inspector that they experience bullying in the home. This includes incidents of racist and homophobic behaviour. Young people stated that staff take these issues seriously. Key-work sessions and young people's meetings show that staff do challenge this behaviour. However, not all incidents of bullying have been recorded and addressed. This means that the interim manager is not able to fully assess and manage the impact of bullying in the home. The interim manager has recently

introduced a new procedure to record and review bullying incidents. This recent improvement has yet to be embedded.

Staff do not consistently apply sanctions for negative behaviour. In addition, some of these measures are not proportionate and related to the young person's behaviour. This means that young people are not always effectively supported to learn from their behaviour. The interim manager is aware of these shortfalls. He has plans to discuss the consistent application of rules and consequences with staff and young people.

There are occasions when young people go missing from the home. Overall, staff offer a robust response to keep them safe. For example, they actively search for them and, when appropriate, involve the police. Young people receive safe and well checks on their return and are offered the opportunity to discuss the incident with an independent visitor. Staff use key-work sessions to help young people explore the triggers to these incidents and understand the risks they are exposed to.

The home has effective links with a range of safeguarding agencies. The interim manager uses these relationships to frequently share information and, when necessary, organise multi-agency review meetings to manage risk. Staff also send social workers monthly progress reports for each young person. Social workers told the inspector, 'Communication [with staff] is excellent. I am kept well informed,' and 'Communication is fantastic. Staff are great at keeping me updated.'

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

The staff team has experienced adversity in recent months. Young people's challenging and risk-taking behaviours, and staff shortages, have contributed to this. Managers and staff have worked additional hours to fill staffing gaps. This has contributed to low staff morale at times. In response, the interim manager and leaders have introduced additional opportunities for staff reflection and learning. In addition, a staff recruitment drive is ongoing.

The responsible individual has undertaken an extensive review of the care young people receive. This took place prior to the inspection. A development plan is in place to address several shortfalls. The responsible individual and interim manager acknowledge that there have been shortfalls in the level of monitoring and oversight of care. The interim manager plans to develop his leadership skills with a key focus on staff development, reflection and promoting consistent care.

The interim manager does not always ensure that admissions to the home are appropriate and in line with young people's needs. For example, a young person with highly complex and individualised needs was unable to settle in the home's group living environment. Young people already living in the home were apprehensive about the admission of the child and expressed their views to staff. Despite this, the child was admitted. Unfortunately, the home served notice on the child because of the impact he had on other young people at the home. This was an unsettling experience for the young people.

Staff benefit from a good-quality training programme. The interim manager and leaders are keen to develop staff practice and offer opportunities for internal promotion. Staff told the inspector that they feel supported by managers. New staff feel that their inductions are robust and provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills. Staff receive regular and good-quality supervisions.

Young people's plans are up to date and clearly outline their needs. Regular internal review meetings monitor young people's progress and set targets for future support. Staff work closely with the home's therapist when reviewing progress. This joined-up approach means that young people receive care that is in line with their needs.

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: SC448209

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Amberleigh Care Limited

Registered provider address: Amberleigh Care Ltd, Golfa Hall, Golfa, Welshpool, Powys SY21 9AF

Responsible individual: Kevin Gallagher

Registered manager: Simon Roberts

Inspector

Gareth Leckey, social care inspector

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