

SC448209

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2020.

**Visit dates:** 7 to 8 October 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 1 August 2019

**Previous inspection judgement:** Requires improvement to be good

## Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Findings from the visit

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

## **The care of children**

Children told the inspectors that they feel happy and settled. They speak positively about their relationships with staff. A child told the inspector, 'I don't have a favourite member of staff, they are all good, I can speak to them all.'

Staff have worked hard to ensure that children maintain contact with those who matter most to them during the COVID-19 restrictions. For example, children use video calls to communicate with their family. Staff organise picnics in local parks to ensure that children and their families can continue to maintain positive relationships.

Children are respected and valued by staff. Their views are considered in the day-to-day running of the home. Some children take lead roles in organising events or cooking for their peers. This inclusive practice supports them to build a strong sense of belonging to their home.

Staff ensure that children take part in a range of activities that reflect their individual interests. During lockdown, children have developed new skills, including carpentry, cooking and gardening. Children enjoy trips to the beach, local parks and walking with staff. These experiences have helped children to develop positive childhood memories.

A therapist is employed by the home. Their clinical oversight supports staff to implement the therapeutic model of care. Some children experience challenges associated with their emotional and mental health. Staff work closely with the therapist and health agencies to provide children with well-informed and coordinated support.

All children attend the on-site school. Their education has not been adversely affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff work closely with teachers to provide children with consistent care. Overall, children make good academic and social progress. For some, this is significant progress from their starting point.

## **The safety of children**

The inspection found some shortfalls in staff's safeguarding practice. For example, staff do not follow procedures in relation to setting children's bedroom door alarms when they are settled at night. The registered manager has identified and addressed this shortfall with staff. In addition, some staff do not consistently record that they are monitoring children who are at risk of self-harm. Despite this recording shortfall, staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the protocols they should follow to monitor those children who are at risk of harm.

Some children display self-harming behaviour due to a legacy of historic trauma. Overall, staff work well with the therapist and health professionals to put safety

plans in place. However, the vast majority of staff have not received training in this aspect of care. In addition, staff do not have the equipment or training to manage the risks associated with ligature use. The registered manager took immediate action during the inspection to address these training and equipment shortfalls.

Overall, children's risk assessments are clear and up to date. Staff use information from children and a variety of agencies to ensure that risk assessments are well informed. However, protocols in relation to alarming children's bedrooms lack detail and have the potential to confuse staff and encourage inconsistent practice. The registered manager rectified this shortfall during the inspection.

Staff provide a robust response when children go missing from the home. For example, they follow children and complete extensive searches when they lose sight of them. Staff work effectively with the police to locate children and return them safely. Staff and independent professionals spend time with children to understand the reasons why they went missing.

Staff provide children with clear, consistent boundaries and routines. They use praise and rewards for positive behaviour. Children's meetings provide them with an opportunity to explore their behaviours and emotions. These forums also support children to acknowledge and take ownership of their behaviours.

## **Leaders and managers**

The registered manager leads a committed and nurturing staff team. He has worked hard to address some of the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection. The registered manager has made a positive impact on the lives of children and staff. As a result, the home has enjoyed a period of stability in recent months.

Senior leaders and the in-house therapeutic team support the registered manager to continually develop staff practice. Staff supervision sessions strike a healthy balance between development and challenge.

A senior manager completes a quarterly audit of staff practice and the quality of care children receive. This comprehensive oversight identifies strengths and areas of development. However, the registered manager's monitoring systems require further development. While he oversees many practical aspects of the care provided to children, his monitoring systems lack the oversight and analysis required to consistently identify shortfalls. For example, the inspectors found shortfalls in record-keeping, staff training and inconsistent staff practice.

The registered manager ensures that children's plans are comprehensive and individualised. He works closely with social workers to develop a clear understanding of children's needs. Staff support children to understand and review their plans.

The registered manager works effectively with a range of professionals to provide children with joined-up care. He shares information effectively and initiates multi-agency meetings to discuss children’s progress. When necessary, he shares information promptly and takes appropriate action to resolve safeguarding concerns.

## 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 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—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm;</p> <p>that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(i)(v)(b)(e))</p>	<p>30/11/2020</p>
<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—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p>	<p>30/11/2020</p>

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(h))</p>	
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## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC448209

**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

## Inspectors

Gareth Leckey, Social Care Inspector  
James Tallis, Social Care Inspector

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