

SC020595

Registered provider: Family Care Associates Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is one of several homes owned by this independent provider. The home provides care for up to four children who present with complex behaviours following adverse childhood experiences and trauma.

The home has a registered manager who has been in post since October 2018. He is suitably skilled and experienced and holds a level 5 diploma in leadership, health and social care.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 20 November 2019 to carry out a full inspection. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 April 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 20 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/11/2019	Full	Good
13/11/2018	Full	Good
08/03/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/06/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The dynamic and personalised support offered by staff ensures that all children thrive. The registered manager and staff's care of children is informed by a strong knowledge of research-based practice. This includes the home's therapeutic model, which is at the heart of its child-focused approach to meeting the needs of children.

Two children have lived at the home for a long time and have made exceptional progress. This is because staff tailor the help they give to children based on their in-depth knowledge of each child. A third child, who has not lived at the home as long, is also doing remarkably well. Staff have worked closely with the home's clinical team to develop a comprehensive understanding of this child's needs. Due to this, staff have been quick to learn how best to help the child.

Staff use input from a clinical therapist to agree the strategies to support children. This includes the use of research-informed sensory play. Children learn to deal with the memories of difficult past experiences and, as a result, their emotional resilience and self-regulatory skills improve. Children are now significantly less likely to self-harm, go missing from the home or become aggressive towards others.

Children trust staff and enjoy spending time with them. Children feel valued, cared for and listened to. Furthermore, children benefit hugely from being able to receive affection and warmth from those staff who look after them. For example, inspectors observed one child seeking out a hug from staff. These positive relationships ensure that children flourish.

Staff are creative in meeting the needs of children. For example, staff recognised that one child, who was self-isolating due to COVID-19, was struggling with the lack of physical affection from staff. Staff gave the child a teddy bear; each member of staff had hugged the teddy bear and written a message on it for the child. The child was able to hug the teddy bear and read the messages whenever they were feeling upset or anxious. This provided the child with reassurance and comfort during a difficult time. As a result, the child was able to successfully regulate their emotions. For this child, this was a real achievement.

Staff have high aspirations for children and are committed to supporting them to develop their talents. Children are provided with various opportunities to partake in clubs and physical activities, such as performance arts groups and BMX club. During the inspection, one child completed a dance routine for the inspectors. Considering the child's history, their confidence in being able to do this demonstrates the progress that they have made.

Thoughtful staff help children to create positive memories during their time at the home. Children spoke fondly of the staff, and proudly showed inspectors photographs of their fun experiences with staff. These included festive celebrations, days out and activities in the home. Children have been able to create lots of positive childhood memories, which are captured and celebrated by the staff.

Children do well at school because staff promote a culture of positive attainment in education. One child, who previously had poor attendance and had been excluded from school prior to living in the home, now goes to school full time and her attendance has increased dramatically. Two teachers told the inspectors that the registered manager and staff work proactively with them. For example, the registered manager shares children's risk assessments and therapeutic support plans so that the school and the home work in a consistent way.

Staff regularly talk to children about how well they are doing. This regular positive feedback gives children a greater awareness of their achievements. This helps children to develop their positive self-image. Children's emotional welfare has improved as a result of this.

One young person, who no longer lives at the home, benefited greatly from her time living in the home. Specifically, the therapeutic care and support offered to her by staff helped drive improvements in her mental health. Prior to the young person moving out of the home, to live on her own, she was flooded with support and guidance from staff. This meant that the young person was well prepared to live independently. Staff have shown their continued commitment to this young person by maintaining contact with her. As such, the young person can continue to access help from staff when she needs it.

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

Dynamic and responsive staff are skilful at pre-empting challenging behaviours and work quickly to implement distraction and de-escalation techniques. Furthermore, staff are successful at looking beyond children's presenting behaviours and instead consider what may be troubling the child. This contributes to staff being confident in responding to incidents and resolving them promptly.

The skilled staff support children to better understand the reasons for their behaviours and to make informed choices. Similarly, children are supported to recognise the situations in which they may be at risk of harm and the strategies they can use to reduce this risk. This means that children learn the skills to keep themselves safer.

Staff place a strong emphasis on children's successes and positive behaviours. Children are rewarded with lots of attention and gratitude when they have been well behaved or done something well. Children respond well to this and strive for these positive acclamations.

The registered manager's diligent oversight ensures that risk assessments are purposeful, up to date and of excellent quality. This helps staff to work consistently and have an in-depth knowledge of the potential triggers to children's risk-taking behaviours. Staff are able to act proactively and swiftly to respond to emerging situations. As a result, safeguarding incidents have significantly reduced and are rare. When incidents occur, any identified learning is quickly implemented.

During this inspection, a child went missing while at school. In response to this situation, staff communicated effectively with external partner agencies and relevant family members. The staff's proactive approach meant that the child returned home safely and quickly.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is highly experienced, inspirational and effective in managing the home. He is supported by an equally competent deputy manager who shares his vision and passion for improving the lives of children. The managers are child-focused in their approach and have been successful in embedding the therapeutic parenting model that is the cornerstone of the tailored care provided to children. Children thrive because of this.

The staff team is stable and therefore children know staff well. When new staff are being recruited, the registered manager allows children to be involved in their appointment. This means that children are able to have a meaningful say in who looks after them. This helps children to feel valued and important.

The dedicated and hard-working staff team is provided with excellent support and guidance from managers. For example, in addition to regular supervision, staff have access to clinical support for themselves. The manager encourages staff to use meditation and yoga as coping mechanisms. This helps to strengthen staff resilience and contributes to the positive and relaxed culture in the home.

Professionals speak highly of the registered manager, as well as of staff. One social worker said that they see the positive relationships that their child has with staff and that there are always lots of hugs and warmth shared. The social worker noted that communication with staff is excellent and she is always well informed. Feedback from other professionals echoes this viewpoint. One teacher commented that the staff work hand in hand with them in order to meet the child's needs.

The registered manager's influence extends beyond this single home. For example, his approach to tracking children's progress, which includes the regular use of monthly monitoring tools, has been shared throughout the provider's other homes. This is helping to ensure that the registered manager's forward-thinking approach is adopted in many other homes.

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: SC020595

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Family Care Associates Limited

Registered provider address: 60 School Lane, Bamber Bridge, Preston,
Lancashire PR5 6QE

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Hiley

Registered manager: James Spice

Inspectors

Sam Dulay-Kainth, Social Care Inspector
Lisa O'Donovan, Social Care Inspector

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