

# SC449155

Registered provider: The Amicus Community Arundel Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The children's home is part of an independent children's therapeutic community. It provides therapeutic care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager was registered on 18 May 2012.

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.

### Inspection dates: 8 to 9 September 2021

**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:** 29 May 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
29/05/2019	Full	Good
30/07/2018	Full	Good
14/11/2017	Full	Good
09/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children living at this home experience well-planned care from staff who are attentive and familiar with the children's needs. As a result, children develop positive relationships with staff and make good progress. Meaningful joint working across the therapeutic community provides an effective wraparound service for children.

Staff support children to engage in education at the organisation's school. The social worker for one child described how, before admission, they were unable to be in a classroom with other children due to the high frequency of their behavioural incidents. Living at this home has made the child feel less anxious. As their sense of security has increased, the number of incidents has reduced dramatically, and they are now able to attend school full time. The child is significantly younger than the other children who live at the home. At school, the child is in a class with children of their own age. The child is making excellent progress and learning social skills as well as core curriculum subjects. Children's life chances are improved because of a sensitive, individualised approach to care.

All aspects of the care children receive are therapeutic. This enables children to make good progress in relation to their emotional well-being. When they are ready, children are offered individual play therapy and psychotherapy sessions. These sessions provide a safe place for children to talk about traumatic events in their lives. For one child in particular, this has had a very positive impact on their mental health. They are now able to manage their emotions and talk to adults about how they are feeling. They were unable to do this when they arrived. Instead, they would show people how they were feeling by displaying aggressive behaviour towards adults. The careful support children receive gives them opportunities to explore their early life experiences and learn how to express themselves in a way which promotes relationships based on trust and respect.

Children are encouraged to explore and develop a sense of their own identity. One child is very interested in creative activities. They are being actively encouraged to pursue an interest in learning to play a range of musical instruments. Another child was struggling to accept their cultural heritage. Sensitive support has enabled them to engage in meaningful discussions which allow them to explore their identity at their own pace. Staff have created an environment which expands children's interests and tells them that diversity is celebrated.

The progress children make is measured in a range of ways. Staff make sure they notice achievements which may seem small, but which are real progress for children. As a result, children experience nurturing care, and this gives them the confidence to work hard to achieve goals which are important to them.

Children's 'my journey' books, which are part of life-story work, have an absence of meaningful commentary to accompany the photographs. This means that the

records do not fully reflect children's enjoyable experiences. Consequently, children are not provided with a full and complete record of their time at the home.

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

Safeguarding children is a priority. Staff are attuned and responsive to the risks that are present for children individually, and as a group.

Before any child moves into the home, managers complete assessments to establish their suitability for the therapeutic community. Managers undertake a thorough risk assessment of the likely impact of the child, focusing on their needs alongside those of children who already live there. This results in careful planning and matching.

Managers recognise the importance of learning from safeguarding incidents. They carry out thorough investigations, involving external safeguarding agencies when necessary. They ensure that any learning from incidents is shared with the wider staff team. This responsive approach reduces the risk that potentially harmful situations will reoccur.

Staff receive regular supervision and good-quality training that is relevant to the needs of the children that they are looking after. However, supervision records do not demonstrate opportunities for staff to fully explore safeguarding practice within supervision. As a result, there are missed opportunities to embed learning from safeguarding training and ensure staff stay alert to signs that children are at risk of harm.

Staff recruitment files do not fully demonstrate safe recruitment practice. Managers do not explore candidates' reasons for leaving all previous positions involving work with children and vulnerable adults. This removes an important level of scrutiny with regard to staff conduct and performance in their previous work with children.

Therapeutic community meetings take place daily. These meetings enable effective information-sharing about children's current risks. All behavioural incidents are discussed. Behaviour management responses are scrutinised by managers to ensure that they are proportionate and appropriate. However, discussions about sanctions are not reliably captured in records. This shortfall in recording undermines the manager's ability to have oversight of the use of sanctions to ensure that they are fair, effective and applied consistently.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Managers are passionate in their efforts to be good role models and trusted figures for the children and for the staff. Staff report excellent support from managers. They describe a culture which promotes mutual respect. This thoughtful and inclusive approach from managers promotes a positive ethos where children benefit from genuine care.

Managers are actively recruiting to fill care staff vacancies. In the interim, managers fill rota gaps themselves or with staff who know the children well. This ensures there is no impact on the quality of care the children receive. However, this has had an impact on service development in terms of the recording of the outcome of management's monitoring activities.

Working closely with other professionals is given high priority by managers. Whilst feedback from other professionals is not routinely gathered and collated, managers are responsive to other professionals' views. One social worker described a situation when she raised a concern to managers about a comment a staff member made to a child during the social worker's visit. Managers were quick to address the concern and give the social worker feedback which reassured her the matter had been addressed. This transparent approach demonstrates a culture of openness.

Managers are in the process of streamlining recording systems to ensure that there is not an unmanageable burden on staff with regard to keeping records up to date. They are sensitive to the need to ensure that changes to practice are introduced slowly so that staff do not feel overwhelmed.

The new independent person is providing a more rigorous level of scrutiny. Consequently, reports now contain evaluation and an analysis of the impact of the care that children receive. Managers make good use of these reports to inform service development.

Leaders and managers have sound awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. There is a comprehensive service development plan in place to further improve the service. Managers demonstrate a commitment to ensuring continuous improvement to address the shortfalls that they have identified.

## 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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The requirements are that</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person should seek to verify candidates' reasons for leaving all previous roles involving work with children or vulnerable adults.</p>	31 October 2021
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person should ensure that the children's 'my journey' books are regularly maintained to meaningfully reflect children's experiences.</p>	31 October 2021

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained and refreshed. Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)
- The registered person should ensure that records of sanctions demonstrate that their effectiveness is monitored. Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

## **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:** SC449155

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** The Amicus Community Arundel Limited

**Registered provider address:** PO Box 79, Arundel BN18 9XA

**Responsible individual:** Rebecca Newton

**Registered manager:** Stewart Thomson

## **Inspector**

Helen Simmons, Social Care Inspector

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