

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC449155
<b>Inspector</b>	Keith Riley
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Registered person</b>	The Amicus Community Arundel Limited
<b>Registered person address</b>	The Amicus Community PO Box 79 Arundel West Sussex BN18 9XA
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Rebecca Susan Newton
<b>Registered manager</b>	Stewart Michael Thomson
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	20/01/2014

<b>Inspection date</b>	25/11/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>outstanding</b>
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	outstanding
Leadership and management	outstanding

## Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	<b>outstanding</b>
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This is a home that specialises in therapeutic care. Outcomes for young people are exceptional; the care provided has a significant impact on the emotional well-being of young people who live in the home. Young people are central to all aspects of the home's care practice. This includes detailed records and comprehensive individual guidance on how best to meet young people's immediate and longer-term needs. The staff work very effectively with other professionals, such as psychotherapists.

Young people have a real voice in how the home is run. Their views, wishes and feelings are regularly taken into account. The management team routinely consider young people's pre-occupations and anxieties.

Relationships between young people and staff are excellent. Young people form secure attachments and develop appropriate, mature relationships with all staff, including ancillary workers. Young people talk very positively about the staff and acknowledge that the care and support they provide is excellent.

Young people are physically and emotionally safe in this home. As well as diligently following child protection procedures, the staff are proactive in safeguarding the emotional well-being of young people. Young people are able to find alternative ways of expressing their painful emotions. They live in a home where the staff

understand them and keep them safe. The approach to e-safety is worthy of wider dissemination. Young people have access to the kinds of technology they love to use while being kept as safe as possible. The combination of open and transparent relationships with the staff and the effective use of protective software mean that young people are able to access the internet safely.

The Registered Manager is an exceptional leader. He channels the efforts of staff very effectively and motivates and supports them to ensure the best possible outcomes for young people. He is ambitious for the young people and demonstrates an energetic commitment to continuous improvement.

Two minor shortfalls relating to documentation have been identified neither of which has a negative impact on young people.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home provides four places for young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is one of two children's homes operated by the same private organisation. Young people living at the home attend the organisation's own school.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/01/2014	Interim	good progress
05/07/2013	Full	outstanding
19/02/2013	Full	good

### What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

#### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- send a copy of the Regulation 34 report to HMCI within 28 days of completion (Volume 5 statutory guidance, para 3.14)
- record carefully the full details of any measure of control or restraint. (Volume 5 statutory guidance, para 2.91)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

The home offers real stability. Young people who have experienced multiple placement breakdowns find security, acceptance and hope in this home. Over time, young people are able to come to terms with their traumatic experiences. They are able to find alternative ways of managing painful emotions. A therapist said of one young person that 'he has realistic expectations of therapy and is gaining self-awareness and understanding of his history'. A placing social worker said, 'x has done very well and has much more confidence to express himself through language rather than acting out'. Significant improvements include young people no longer causing serious damage to their environment and learning to keep their rooms clean and tidy. The records show that the number of significant incidents has reduced dramatically.

Young people make excellent progress in terms of their health. Not only do they not misuse substances, but they also keep themselves as healthy as possible by, for example, engaging in physical exercise such as cycling or going to the gym. Young people show a good understanding of healthy eating and are involved in choosing the menus. They take responsibility for their own health and attend all health appointments, including for example routine vaccinations.

Young people's educational outcomes are outstanding. Young people who had previously disengaged from education now have excellent attendance records. They make very good progress and are meeting their academic targets. By building confidence in their academic and social skills, young people are able to develop further in ways that was once thought impossible, for example by going to a mainstream college once a week.

Staff work hard to promote contact with individuals who are important to the young people. This includes supervising contact and working with the wider family to facilitate positive contact. The outcomes are exceptional. Young people are able to progress from formal, structured, supervised contact to a more relaxed approach. A professional report confirmed that, 'The home is very proactive in supporting, supervising and enabling contact'.

Young people are encouraged to integrate into the local community, often in quite creative and innovative ways. For example having seen an advert at a local gym for a charity fun run, one young person was able to motivate the other young people in the home to participate. The young people involved spoke with real pride about the money they had managed to raise for a local hospice. Young people become more mature and develop a sense of responsibility toward others. One young person wanted to apologise to neighbours for throwing something over the fence into their garden. Another young person, who has struggled with social interaction, is now assisting a local organisation with football coaching.

Independence is fully promoted. Young people show an interest in developing their skills such as cooking. One young person proudly showed the inspector the progress he had made; he no longer damages his room and now keeps it clean and tidy.

## **Quality of care**

## **outstanding**

The quality of care is exceptional. A placing social worker said the home is the best he has ever worked with. Staff are consistent in their approach. Excellent support is based on real empathy for young people who have experienced significant trauma in their lives. This includes access to other professionals, such as a psychotherapist. Young people are learning what it is to live in a stable environment. They learn to trust adults and develop their sense of self-worth. Young people form safe and appropriate attachments to the staff who genuinely care for them. As a result young people no longer display anti-social or aggressive behaviour.

A therapist said that the staff had done an excellent job in preparing for therapy a young person who has historically struggled to engage. Young people are able to talk about their difficult and traumatic pasts and develop a better understanding of themselves. They receive excellent care and support during this process. One young person was able to write to another young person about their positive experience of therapy in order to encourage the other young person to engage in the process.

The quality of placement plans is exceptional. Extremely detailed plans provide staff with a thorough knowledge of the trauma a young person has experienced and a 24-hour therapeutic curriculum. The level of detail provided in reports for statutory reviews is second to none. They provide an all-round picture of the work being done, the successes and challenges and the intensive therapeutic emotional input. Young people attend their reviews in person and produce written reports setting out their views. Staff ensure that they feed back outcomes in a child-centred way so that young people are able to understand the important decisions that are being made with and about them.

A young person described the staff as very supportive. Staff advocate effectively on behalf of young people at all times. They work closely with their education colleagues to maximise young people's chances of success, for example by providing individually-tailored support and facilities for any young person who is struggling to integrate.

Young people benefit from excellent health care. Staff ensure young people are able to access all routine appointments and are up to date with immunisations. Young people who struggle with more specialist treatment, such as orthodontic treatment, are fully supported. These strategies are successful. Young people who were previously refusing treatment are now receiving the health care they need. They take an interest in healthy activities such as cycling or going to the gym.

Young people live in a close community where their views, wishes and feelings are listened to on a daily basis. They have no need to access the formal complaints process. They are able to express their likes and dislikes and staff try to accommodate them. For example one young person got a new bicycle for his birthday. Another young person was able to go to see his favourite tribute band in concert. Young people were observed talking to staff about how they would like to spend Christmas and make it a 'family' occasion. There have been no complaints since the last inspection

Young people enjoy a range of stimulating activities such as go-karting or going to the cinema or theatre. When they express a particular interest in their education, such as an interest in war history, staff support them by organising trips to a frigate or the Imperial War museum.

### **Keeping children and young people safe** **outstanding**

The approach to safeguarding is outstanding. Staff work well in partnership with other professionals to keep young people safe. Young people say they feel safe and secure in the home. There is an excellent approach to e-safety. Staff use software to protect young people and build open and transparent relationships with them so that young people can access the internet and a range of new technologies safely.

Staff receive training on behaviour management. They are very aware of and responsive to the emotional well-being of young people as they undergo therapy. Coupled with positive reward strategies, this means there is little need for the use of physical interventions. However, on one occasion when physical intervention was used, the records did not fully describe the nature of the violent behaviour which was being exhibited and which led to the young person being restrained in order to keep everyone safe. Young people are not at risk as a result of this minor shortfall.

Incidents involving young people going missing from the home are currently rare. Young people, who have in the past experienced considerable emotional disturbance, feel secure. Their needs are being met. Staff are aware of young people's vulnerabilities and are very clear about what action to take if young people do go missing. Police speak very highly of the home's engagement with them. The Registered Manager maintains a good oversight of any incidents and ensures that staff are following the agreed protocols.

Incidents of bullying are unknown. Excellent placement planning and a thorough knowledge of each young person's needs and vulnerabilities ensure young people live in a calm environment.

There are excellent health and safety procedures in place. The Registered Manager ensures all necessary checks are carried out, including certification by external

contractors if necessary. Comprehensive risk assessments, including for example of fire safety, are used to identify and manage risks.

The recruitment process is very thorough. In addition to well-established safe recruitment practices, young people are involved in assessing job applicants. Specialist interview techniques are used by senior staff to explore why applicants want to work with extremely vulnerable young people. Excellent recruitment practices mean young people are cared for by suitable adults.

## **Leadership and management**

## **outstanding**

There is good attention to detail in all documentation. This is regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure standards are maintained. Each policy is clearly linked to the regulations and national minimum standards with a clear outcome statement. Daily logs are completed diligently by staff and give an accurate picture of the current needs of each young person. A professional said, 'Logs are detailed and concise with real thought put into them'. Life story work is completed with young people and is of an excellent standard. This helps young people to develop an understanding of their backgrounds and promotes self-awareness and a sense of identity.

Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous. The independent visitor, who is highly skilled, carries out unannounced inspections and is meticulous in scrutinising and evaluating the service provided. Internal monitoring arrangements, including Regulation 34 reports, are similarly rigorous. While copies of the monitoring reports are sent to Ofsted at the required intervals, the most recent report has not yet been sent. However, this has not had a negative impact on the young people. This is an outstanding home with a culture of critical self-challenge which is driving continuous improvement.

The Registered Manager has considerable experience in therapeutic care. He holds the necessary therapeutic qualifications and ensures the home remains a leader in its field, for example by retaining accreditation with the Royal College of Psychiatry. The Registered Manager receives excellent support and supervision, including 'full professional analysis' and clinical supervision.

Having recognised the need to further strengthen the staff team, the Registered Manager has recently completed a successful recruitment drive. He ensures that the staff recruited have the necessary skills, experience and motivation to work with extremely vulnerable young people. Young people are cared for by a strong and able staff team. The Registered Manager's has an inclusive approach as evidenced by the fact that bank staff say they feel totally part of the team and receive the same training as permanent staff. Bank staff are able to demonstrate that they have the same knowledge and understanding of the young people in their care as their permanent colleagues. Housekeeping staff also take a real interest in the young people and build good relationships with them. Young people will on occasion invite

ancillary staff to come and have lunch with them when they are not on duty.

All staff complete core training and are fully supported with their personal and professional development. They undergo a comprehensive induction and are subject to a probationary period during which they must demonstrate their competence. Staff are then supported to complete professional qualifications, such as a diploma in therapeutic care. Staff grow in knowledge, skills and competence. They are confident in caring for young people who have experienced trauma. They are able to discuss any issues in supervision, including any personal issues that might impact on their work. Young people benefit from being supported by a competent staff team who are well supported themselves. Morale is high and contributes to a warm, loving atmosphere in the home.

There is good joined-up working both within the organisation and with other professionals. Easy access to a professional therapist means that young people do not have to wait for support from, for example, Child Adolescent Mental Health Services.

Excellent systems are in place across the organisation to ensure effective communication. The focus is on the needs of the young people, including their pre-occupations and anxieties. Young people benefit from the caring, supportive and responsive approach of the staff, especially to their emotional well-being.

Young people are fully supported toward independence. As well as domestic skills, such as cooking, young people are taught how to travel independently and keep themselves safe. The home's contribution to pathway plans is exceptional. The Registered Manager ensures that every young person has a pathway plan by the time they are 16. This increases young people's chances of success as they move into adulthood.

The desire to continually improve the quality of care provided is evident in the Registered Manager's vision for the service. This includes improvements to the physical environment. For example, there are plans to redevelop a small building in the garden for use by the young people.

There have been no complaints since the last inspection. All significant events are notified to the relevant authorities as required by regulation.

## What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

## Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.

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