

1250253

Registered provider: Achieving Aspirations Community Interest Company

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a private organisation and provides permanent care for one child and a short-break service for up to three children with physical and/or learning disabilities. The service offers overnight respite stays and assessment breaks.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2019.

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 home on 3 March 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 June 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 28 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/02/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/04/2019	Full	Good
11/07/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/03/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

Three children were having an overnight break during the inspection. The home has recently increased the number of children staying at one time, following the lifting of restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The home remained open during national lockdown periods and offered a flexible and responsive service.

Generally, the staff know the children well and cater for their specific needs, although this is not consistent for children who are new to the home. Several children have autism spectrum disorders and associated communication difficulties. However, staff do not always have enough information about the children. One child's records included only brief notes to inform the staff about their care and another child's file included information that the staff were unaware of. The staff caring for a child who is new to the home were not aware of the child's dietary preferences or preferred personal care routines. This does not provide good individualised care for children who cannot easily express their views.

Some of the children have complex health conditions, including diabetes. The medical protocol and health plan guidance for one child are incomplete and unclear. There is missing information about blood sugar levels and the required quantities of insulin. Incomplete information means that the staff are not clearly guided to meet the child's health needs. The staff rely on the child's parent to show them how to monitor the child's health condition. The manager has requested training for the staff but this has not yet been provided. Consequently, there are staff who lack the confidence and knowledge to meet the child's health needs.

The home is adequately furnished and provides a low-stimulus environment that meets children's needs. However, the storage of syringes on a windowsill is not sterile. The garden is welcoming and child-friendly with water play, sensory play, a wooden teepee and a mud kitchen. However, the grass is long, the barked area and patios have lots of weeds and a storage box is broken. This makes it difficult to check for any small hazards, such as stones or sharp edges.

Parents spoke positively about the home and the benefits to their children and families.

An exciting range of activities was planned for the May 2021 half-term holiday. These activities give children opportunities to have new experiences that they may not be able to have with their families because of the children's needs.

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

Some of the children's risk assessments are of poor quality. Two children had the same risk assessment which contained information about another child. The assessments are not accurate and fail to include information from the referral paperwork. Another child's risk assessment does not reflect recent safety concerns raised by the parent. Poor-quality risk assessments have a detrimental effect on staff's ability to keep children safe.

The staff rarely use physical interventions, with only two incidents recorded since the last inspection. However, the records are confusing. The manager has identified the need for improved recording and has booked training with a new provider. The record of one physical intervention is poor. The staff had not identified the need for this record to be completed at the time of the incident; it was not made until over a month after the incident. The feedback from the home to the child's parent failed to include this serious incident. The lack of oversight of restraint records affects the home's ability to keep children safe and help the staff to learn from incidents.

Investigations into safeguarding concerns have improved in quality. A serious concern raised by one parent was responded to appropriately and the child's risk assessment was updated accordingly. The designated officer commented positively about the manager's involvement and the child's parent was happy with the outcome. The staff have increased the support to this child following this incident, after this was requested by the manager, to help keep the child safe.

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

The manager holds a relevant level 5 qualification. There is a new deputy manager, following a period when the post was vacant. The last year has presented several challenges because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The allocation of places for short breaks were based on priority of need. Allocations were agreed at the weekly multi-agency panel meetings. Concerns about the risks associated with the pandemic and a lack of senior staff have resulted in several shortfalls in the leadership and managerial oversight of the home.

There is a lack of scrutiny of the records and care plans. Consequently, some documents are incomplete, and others contain inaccurate information. This means that staff are unaware of some information about the children.

Some staff are in personal relationships with other staff at the home. Although risk assessments are in place to support safe relationships at work, these fail to accurately reflect the current staffing arrangements. The safeguarding policy does not give clear direction to staff. This means that safeguarding procedures designed to keep children safe and to support an open culture for staff are unclear.

Most staff receive regular supervision and spoke of being well supported by the manager. However, there are gaps in staff's knowledge about children's individual health needs. Some staff have not undertaken training in areas such as autism spectrum disorders and diabetes. This lack of training affects staff's ability to provide individualised care to children.

The manager has not submitted an updated statement of purpose to Ofsted, despite changes to the conditions of registration and staffing. Therefore, Ofsted does not hold current information about the home.

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. 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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b)) In particular, ensure that: the children's risk assessments include current accurate information that is relevant to the child; the safeguarding policy specifies clear lines of reporting when there are concerns about senior staff. In addition, ensure that the appointment and recruitment of staff is in accordance with the Relationships at Work policy.	30 June 2021

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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, use monitoring and review systems to ensure that records accurately reflect events and that records are checked by senior staff.	30 June 2021
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. 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; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)) In particular, ensure that staff receive specific training to manage children's health needs.	30 June 2021
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's	30 June 2021

home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that staff have information on children's needs before their first stay at the home and that staff implement the children's plans.	
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	30 June 2021
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— a description of the measure and its duration. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv))	30 June 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. In particular, ensure that the garden area is maintained to a good standard and that liquid feeding syringes are stored hygienically. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 1250253

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Achieving Aspirations Community Interest Company

Registered provider address: Suffolk House, 7 Hydra Orion Court, Addison Way,
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Responsible individual: Anna Boulton

Registered manager: Katy Plumridge

Inspectors

Joe Cox, Social Care Inspector
Deirdra Keating, Social Care Inspector

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