

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 privately-run home provides permanent care for up to one child and a short-break service for up to three other children with physical and/or learning disabilities. The service offers respite stays and assessment breaks.

There has been no registered manager since February 2023.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

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: 2 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/12/2021	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/06/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/02/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

The quality of care of care provided has been affected by the shortfalls identified in how children are helped and protected and the leadership and management of the home. Children's overall experiences are generally positive. However, opportunities to improve these have been repeatedly missed.

The home's environment is not maintained to a suitable standard. The outdoor spaces are unkempt with leaves and weeds, and the grass is not regularly cut. Unused equipment has been left in several places with no plans for disposal. This discourages use by children. Windows have not been cleaned, and damaged paintwork is not repaired quickly. When damage has occurred to radiator covers and kitchen cabinets, these items have not been replaced. Broken shower heads have not been identified as needing replacing, and there are no plans in place to repair floors stained with limescale.

Children and their families are not routinely asked for their views. Their experiences are not evaluated so that improvements can be made. When children make progress, this is not celebrated or captured to be shared with others involved in their care or education. Children's experiences are not captured in memory books or diaries for them to share or take with them to reflect on.

Improvements have been made to the oversight of the management of medicines. The new system is now overseen by a dedicated and experienced member of staff. This has led to a significant reduction in errors. Care plans clearly identify children's health needs. Staff access good-quality, face-to-face training in delegated health tasks. Staff are confident in supporting children with their complex health needs. However, mealtime menu options do not encourage children to make healthy eating choices; choices of vegetables are often limited to one type with each meal.

The manager is making improvements in finding activities for children to enjoy. This includes using public transport to use local facilities. Relatives said that their children enjoy this, and it benefits their steps to greater independence. Staff are experienced in providing sensory-based activities, such as exploring textures and tastes. The on-site, multi-sensory den is well used by children for enjoyment and as a place of calm.

Children who have stayed for longer periods or more frequent short breaks have made progress with gaining independence. Staff know children well, particularly their complex communication needs. Staff were observed encouraging children to support themselves using prompts and clear direction. This is reinforced using picture and sign language.

Parents and professionals said that children receive care and support that meets their needs from staff who they have built a good relationship with. Parents feel involved in their child's care at the home and are kept up to date by staff on their child's well-being.

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

Incidents of restrictive physical interventions are rare. However, previously identified shortfalls in the management of these have still not been addressed. On four occasions, debriefs with staff did not take place at all or within required timescales. Therefore, opportunities for learning and identifying unsafe practice were missed.

Inspectors identified shortfalls in fire safety around the building, including fire extinguishers not being in the designated place. One fire escape door had additional security added that restricted its use. This had not been noticed by managers. Managers took immediate action when inspectors drew this to their attention. The home's fire risk assessment review was overdue by more than a year. Some advisory actions in the report have not been addressed or any rationale recorded to reflect why they would not be addressed.

Managers have not always taken suitable action after incidents to ensure the security of the building. A recent security incident requiring police attendance was not notified to Ofsted for 11 days. The likely cause of the incident had not been addressed, meaning there was a risk of this being repeated. Managers took immediate action when inspectors drew this to their attention.

Children's care plans contain clear directions for staff to follow to encourage positive behaviours and help children to settle when distressed. Staff access comprehensive training in behaviour support and de-escalation for children with learning disabilities or autism spectrum disorders. However, on one occasion, a child received a consequence that was not suitable or authorised. Although this was an isolated incident, it was not identified as taking place by managers despite being clearly recorded.

Safeguarding incidents are well managed. Any investigation required is completed in detail in a timely way and suitable action is taken. Local safeguarding professionals said that managers are responsive and knowledgeable in safeguarding practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

A new manager, supported by a new deputy, has recently been appointed. Staff said that this has been a very welcome and beneficial step. Professionals said that the manager is warm and has positive relationships with children and their families. The manager has implemented systems to improve recruitment checks and the frequency and quality of supervision sessions. The manager and deputy manager are committed to the children and enthusiastic.

There has been a sustained failure by leaders and managers to identify and address shortfalls. Improvements have been limited and further shortfalls have occurred. The home has not received an inspection judgement of good since 2019.

Managerial monitoring and oversight do not assess the quality of the care provided to ensure that the experiences of children receiving short breaks are positive. Reviews of the quality of care have been submitted to Ofsted in an incomplete format. Children's views are not gathered or those of their families and professionals. Any targets or actions set in these reviews do not have resources, responsibilities or timescales identified.

The quality of provision has been severely affected by changes of managers. The oversight of manager performance by senior leaders has been insufficient. Staff have not been suitably supported, and morale has been affected negatively. In part, this has been due to unavoidable circumstances.

Managers and staff do not understand the model of care provision as stated in the home's statement of purpose. The statement of purpose has not been regularly reviewed and updated. Recent updates have not been submitted to Ofsted or updated on the provider's website.

The provider enables staff to access high-quality, face-to-face training in an extensive range of subjects. Staff said that this is beneficial for them to support children in a short-break setting with a very wide range of needs. Staff enjoy the training and use the opportunity for team building. This has been particularly important for improving morale.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i) (c)(i)(ii))	31 July 2023
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—	31 July 2023

that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)) In particular: The registered person must ensure that staff only apply consequences to children when this has been agreed and is in accordance with a child’s positive behaviour support plan.	
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; 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) This requirement was made at the last two inspections and is restated.	31 July 2023

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. If a home has a website, the registered person must ensure that a copy of the statement of purpose is published on that website unless the registered person considers that such publication would prejudice the welfare of children in the home. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b) (4))	31 July 2023
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b))	30 June 2023
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)) This requirement was made at the last two inspections and is restated.	30 June 2023
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious (Regulation 40 (4)(b))	30 June 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted on. (Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to help children make positive choices in healthy eating and nutrition. (Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)

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: 80 Compair Crescent, Ipswich, Suffolk IP2 0EH

Responsible individual: Anna Boulton

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jamie Cousins, Social Care Inspector

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