

1258276

Registered provider: Achieving Aspirations Community Interest Company

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is one of two residential short-break services run by a small private organisation. The service provides residential short breaks for a maximum of five children at any one time, and long-term care for up to three children. The children may have intellectual and developmental disabilities and additional complex health needs, including autism spectrum disorder.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2022.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 June 2023

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: 25 October 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
25/10/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/01/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

There were seven children staying at the home at the time of inspection. The majority of children have complex health needs, learning disabilities, and associated communication needs. Most children stay for short breaks, and two children live permanently at the home.

Staff and managers do not routinely gain children's views and wishes. Staff understand how children communicate but have not developed ways to gain their views. This means children's views are not used to develop their plans and the home. The staff understand the communication aids that children use with their families. All staff attend communication training to develop their knowledge of communicating. However, specific support to help children communicate is not detailed in their plans.

Children's care plans are not up to date. Plans do not accurately detail children's needs or how to care for them safely. The children have a range of medical support needs that are not accurately recorded in their plans. Children's dietary requirements, and moving and handling arrangements, are not always accurate. This could result in staff following incorrect information.

The patio area is not safe for children. The uneven patio slabs are a trip hazard, and this has been identified at the last two inspections. The corridors and bedrooms are generally bright and child friendly. However, one bedroom requires redecorating and another has no storage for the child's belongings. This is despite this child living at the home long term. This does not encourage a sense of belonging or permanence for the child.

Most children attend school. The staff support children's attendance, helping with routines and transport when needed.

Staff support children to participate in activities. During children's stays, activities take place in and around the home. Some children receive support to participate in activities in the community. For example, children go shopping in the local area and enjoy days out at the coast.

Staff support children who require longer stays at the home, and adapt these stays to meet children's needs. This provides consistency and stability to children.

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

Managers do not always report safeguarding concerns promptly or correctly. On two occasions, managers did not report concerns to the local authority designated

officer. Managers do not always follow the home's safeguarding policy when reporting safeguarding concerns, because they are unclear about who to report them to. This reduces the external safeguards and prevents timely safeguarding investigations taking place.

Managers do not investigate medication errors in a timely manner. On one occasion, staff failed to administer medication to a child. This error was identified the following day and staff informed the parent and health services. However, managers did not speak to the staff member involved in an adequate time frame or provide any follow-up support for this member of staff.

Incidents are infrequent. The incident reports are detailed and the manager has oversight of these. However, there are no identified actions following incidents to encourage staff to reflect on their practice. This limits staff's learning from incidents.

Managers do not always follow safe recruitment processes. Appropriate references are not always gathered. Managers do not sufficiently assure themselves that references for agency staff have been gained and are appropriate. This could leave children at risk of being cared for by unsuitable adults.

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

There have been a number of recent changes to the leadership team. There is a registered and qualified manager in post. The manager is moving to a senior management role in the organisation. An acting manager and deputy manager support the manager. However, some managers do not spend enough time at the home. The staff do not always know when managers are in, and this does not build good working relationships.

Management oversight is not effective or of good quality. Learning from incidents is limited. Managers do not have clear oversight of children's care plans or risk assessments to ensure that these are reviewed regularly and kept up to date. Managers do not investigate concerns effectively. Concerns about night staff falling asleep have not been investigated. This could leave children at risk.

Managers do not ensure that team meetings are held regularly. The majority of staff have not had an appraisal within the required timescale. Therefore opportunities for staff to discuss their development are not prioritised.

Managers have overseen improvements to training, As a result, staff benefit from appropriate training that is relevant to their roles.

There are some tensions between the staff and managers. Despite staff raising several concerns, there are no effective strategies to address these. This has failed to ensure that staff consistently focus on children's needs. Staff do not all feel supported in their roles and this has affected the overall team morale.

Managers have not taken enough action to address the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. Four requirements out of the six raised have been restated. This does not demonstrate a drive to improve.

Feedback from professionals is positive. Families feel that their children are supported when using the service. Some families feel that communication from managers and staff could improve. There are new systems to communicate with families that are in the early stages of development.

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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)) In particular, ensure that allegations are referred to the local authority designated officer in an appropriate time frame, and that the manager understands how to make referrals.	28 July 2023
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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	1 May 2023

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and 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)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, ensure that comprehensive recruitment checks are carried out.	26 July 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees— have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c)) This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	28 July 2023
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1) (2)(b)(ii)) In particular, ensure that children's plans are up to date and reviewed regularly.	28 July 2023

The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings. (Regulation 7 (1)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)) This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	28 July 2023
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1) (2)(c)(i)) In particular, maintain the garden; replace the uneven patio slabs. This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	28 July 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets children needs. In particular, ensure that fence panels are not stored against the windows, and that children's bedrooms are decorated and furnished to a good standard. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the team provides high-quality care for all children living in the home. They must lead and manage the home in a way that delivers the outcomes and approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. In particular, ensure that there are regular team meetings, and staff receive supervision that guides their practice and provides a focus on children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)
- The registered person should ensure that those with leadership and/or management roles are visible and accessible to staff and able to deliver their leadership and/or management responsibilities. In particular, ensure that staff know when managers are on site and monitor their hours. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.7)
- The registered person should ensure that a workforce plan is in place which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should detail the process and agreed timescale. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

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: 1258276

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: Katy Plumridge

Inspectors

Deirdra Keating, Social Care Inspector

Leanne Lyon, Social Care Inspector

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