

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 that provides a range of services for children and adults who have learning disabilities and additional needs. The service provides residential short breaks to a maximum of six children aged six to 18. The children may have intellectual and developmental disabilities and additional complex health needs, including autistic spectrum conditions. No children were staying at the short-break service during this inspection.

The acting manager has been in post since the last registered manager left in August 2018. An application for registration has been submitted to Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 April 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 4 September 2018

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
04/09/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/10/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Good care planning ensures that the short-break service delivers individualised care that meets the children's complex needs. The admission process and any changes to care, such as the use of a safe-space bed, are individually tailored to each child and their family. A parent described the staff as incredibly patient when managing change. Consequently, the children settle well and do not become over anxious or distressed when their care plan changes.

The children really enjoy their short break. The staff know the children and their families well and build trusting relationships with them. A parent said, 'The staff are very loving. It is a happy place, which my child enjoys coming to. He loves it.'

Staff encourage the children to develop independence skills. Children help with recycling, cooking and making sandwiches. Parents sometimes notice differences in their child following their child's short break, such as improved sleep and eating habits.

Inclusion is central to the organisation's philosophy of care. The staff have undertaken training in communication with disabled children. They seek the children's views through discussion, visual aids and observation of non-verbal communication. Some children use the picture exchange communication system at school. However, this is not consistently used by staff at the short-break service and therefore some children do not experience continuity.

The children enjoy a variety of home-based stimulation. Pieces of the children's artwork are displayed around the home. The staff carefully plan suitable seasonal activities that all the children can enjoy. For example, the staff bought a special Easter egg so that a child who has a food allergy would not miss out on any part of the Easter egg hunt.

The staff take the children out to places that are within walking distance of the home, such as to the high street and the park. However, despite the enthusiasm shown by the manager and staff at the last inspection, children's access to wider community activities continues to be limited. The staff use the deck area in the summer for outside activities such as sand and water play. However, much of the home's garden and outside play equipment remain out of bounds to the children due to safety concerns.

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

The children feel safe and trust the staff. Parents have faith in the staff and are confident that the staff have their child's best interests at heart. A parent who was very apprehensive about their child having short breaks described how staff had given her and her child the confidence to try it. This parent said, 'I love my child going there. I'm not a very trusting person, but I trust them.'

The staff are fully aware that keeping vulnerable children safe is their core duty. The staff receive training in safeguarding disabled children and are aware of the vulnerabilities of disabled children. When potential issues of concern arise, the manager

works collaboratively with other safeguarding professionals to promote the children's safety. Professionals said that the staff are good at balancing rights and individual needs.

Prior to each child's first overnight break, the manager puts in place risk reduction strategies. However, this risk management process is not documented. Therefore, staff may not be aware of areas of risk and the risk management measures. When there are gaps of some months between short-break stays, the manager reviews the child's care plan to ensure that it remains up to date. However, there is not a clear documented system to establish any changes to the children's needs prior to each short-break stay. This means that there is potential for changes to be missed.

A small number of young adults live at the home with the children. These adults have complex needs and are unlikely to present a risk to the children. However, there is no documented consideration or risk assessment of any potential risk factors of adults using the short-break service. It is, therefore, unclear whether all risks have been considered.

The provider has undertaken significant improvement work in relation to fire prevention and management at the home. The local fire officers are now satisfied that the fire arrangements protect the children.

The children benefit from safe, spacious and well-maintained accommodation. The building is equipped to meet the needs of children who have limited physical mobility. However, there are some specific issues that require addressing. The mobile hoist does not enable staff to manoeuvre some of the children to or from floor level. The staff reported the floor covering in one bathroom as unsuitable for children who stand with assistance.

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

There has been no registered manager for over eight months. However, the acting manager has provided stability and applied for registration. In partnership with the responsible individual, the manager has driven improvement at the service. Although there are some areas for development, there are also many strengths. The shortfalls identified do not negatively affect the children's enjoyment of their short breaks. They continue to receive good-quality care and support.

Internal and external quality assurance systems are not consistently robust. The manager has not undertaken a review of the quality of care during the last six months. The visits carried out by the independent visitor and the reports of these visits do not give a good sense of the quality of care and support that children receive. The visitor has often visited when children are at school and has not regularly gained feedback from parents and professionals. As a result, the visitor's ability to understand and comment on the effectiveness of the quality of care is undermined.

There has been significant investment in staff training since the last inspection. Most of the staff have undertaken a wide variety of relevant training that develops their confidence and competence. However, many staff have yet to undertake awareness-raising training in wider safeguarding areas such as preventing radicalisation. Furthermore, three staff who have worked at a children's home for more than two years

have yet to achieve a relevant level 3 diploma in residential childcare. None of the staff who have worked at the home for more than a year have had an appraisal of their performance. Shortfalls in training and performance management arrangements have the potential to affect staff members' confidence. These shortfalls limit opportunities to ensure that all staff are working to the best of their ability.

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
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ('the Level 3 Diploma'); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1 April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1 April 2014, 1 April 2016. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b)(5)(a)(b))	02/09/2019
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for	01/07/2019

children.

After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ('the quality of care review report').

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(5))

Recommendations

- The design of the home should include any necessary adaptation to meet the needs of children with disabilities or specific health issues. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.24)

In particular, ensure that the outside space is safe, suitable and well equipped to meet the children's needs. Provide a hoist that can lift children from the floor and ensure that all bathroom floor coverings are suitable the children.

- The home should work in partnership with relevant people as appropriate to ensure that each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning and daily care. This may include the use of and support to use communication aids, equipment and/or any necessary language support. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6)
- Children with disabilities or illnesses may have physical or emotional difficulties which mean that participation in leisure or cultural activities in the community is difficult to achieve. The registered person, in conjunction with any relevant person (such as a parent or school) should assess what would be safe, achievable and reasonable for each child, in line with their relevant plans, and ensure appropriate opportunities are available for each child to have fun, form friendships and enjoy life, relative to their stage of development and individual needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 32, paragraph 6.10)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. When there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

In particular, ensure that there is a clear risk assessment and risk management

plan for each child that details their behavioural support needs and risk of going missing. Document any changes to children's needs prior to each short break stay. Furthermore, when young adults are accommodated, provide clear documented assessments of risk and risk management plans.

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role that they play in the training and development of staff at the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

In particular, ensure that all staff undertake training in wider safeguarding areas such as preventing radicalisation.

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

In particular, ensure that the independent visitor, as part of their visit, meets and speaks with the children. When it is not possible to ascertain the children's views, the visitor should observe the support provided and the interactions that take place between the children and staff. Furthermore, the visitor should seek the views of parents and professionals on the quality of care provided.

- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

In particular, ensure that all staff who have worked at the home for a year or more have an appraisal of their performance.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Joanna Heller, social care inspector

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