

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 to a maximum of four children and longer-term care for up to two children between the ages of six and 18. The children may have intellectual and developmental disabilities and additional complex health needs, including autism spectrum disorders.

The registered manager resigned on 1 June 2021. At the time of the inspection, management cover was being provided by a manager from one of the organisation's other homes.

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.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 July 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	inadequate
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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: 15 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/04/2019	Full	Good
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: requires improvement to be good

Inadequate leadership and management have resulted in staff not receiving the support that they should. Staff morale is very low. While this has not resulted in harm to the children, it has affected the quality of care that they receive. Unchecked, these shortfalls have the potential to compromise the safety of children.

Managers have not ensured that children have been able to enjoy a good range of activities on their short breaks. Although feedback from families is generally positive, several families have highlighted the lack of activities as an issue. Staff said that insufficient staffing numbers limit the opportunities to take children out.

A mix of experienced and new staff support the children. Families and professionals said that the staff have generally good relationships with the children and know them well. Communication between families and the staff is also generally good.

There is anecdotal evidence of children making some progress. Children have some goals set. However, it is unclear who these goals have been agreed with, and the goals have not yet been reviewed. This means that children's progress is not being celebrated or measured in ways that would be positive for children and families.

The physical environment is not consistently maintained. Some elements of the home, for example the light room, are nice and provide positive opportunities for stimulation and relaxation. However, one side of the garden is poorly maintained, with damaged pathways and hazards. The children are unable to use this area.

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

Risk assessments are in place for children. These cover a wide range of risks. No children have gone missing from the home. Bullying is not considered an issue at present.

There have been few incidents necessitating physical intervention. When this has been used, it has been minimal and used to keep staff or the child safe.

On occasion, staff have not been consistent in their approach to behaviour management. A lack of clarity in records has contributed to this. The new manager has introduced an additional recording system that will enable a wider range of behavioural incidents to be better monitored for trends.

On one occasion, the previous registered manager did not share a safeguarding concern promptly with the designated officer. Although there is nothing to suggest

that any children were placed at risk because of this, there was a failure to follow basic safeguarding processes.

The staff have not had training in safeguarding disabled children. Consequently, staff do not have sufficient awareness and understanding of the protection needs of disabled children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management are inadequate. There are multiple managerial failings at this home. This has affected staff morale, means that staff are not receiving the support that they need, and means that managers have insufficient understanding of important areas of the service.

Managers have not maintained training records. Therefore, it is unclear who has completed important training. As a result, it was unclear during the inspection who had and who had not completed certain health-related training. Managers took steps to begin to address this during the inspection.

Staff supervisions have not been happening for months. Some new staff have had no supervisions since starting their employment at the home. Consequently, staff feel unsupported and are lacking the support and guidance that they need at a time when they are struggling with the repercussions of COVID-19 and the increasingly complex needs of children.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that safe recruitment processes have been followed in respect of agency staff. The records held by the home provide little assurance that appropriate safeguarding checks have taken place.

Management monitoring has been weak. Leaders and managers do not have a clear enough understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. Information was often difficult for managers to locate. For example, despite a fire risk assessment being completed in January 2021, no records of any actions taken in response to the assessment could be found.

Managers have not ensured that case records provide staff with sufficient guidance. In one instance, a care plan detailing behaviour management strategy could not be located. In another instance, care plans and assessments did not provide sufficient clarity regarding night-time staffing arrangements.

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 enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— develop the child's interests and hobbies; participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences; make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community; and that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies. (Regulation 9 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii) (b))	30 September 2021
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— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; 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.	14 August 2021

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)(iii)(v)(vii)(b)) In particular: ensure that safeguarding concerns are shared promptly with designated officers; ensure that staff have knowledge and understanding of the protection needs of disabled children; ensure that actions identified in risk assessments, including the fire risk assessment, are clear and promptly acted on.	
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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; 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)(a)(c)(d)(f)(h)) In particular:	30 September 2021

ensure that staff undertake training to equip them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to safely care for the children at the home; ensure that managers maintain clear records of which staff have undertaken training and the date of completion; ensure that there are always sufficient numbers of appropriately trained staff on shift; ensure that leaders and managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and take action to improve the quality of the service.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). 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) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d))	30 August 2021
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction; The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development;	30 September 2021

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and

have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.
(Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(a)(b))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the physical condition of the home and the garden contributes to a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff work closely with health and education professionals to ensure that outcomes identified and progress made by children are recorded and measured. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have sufficient clear guidance on managing behaviour. Staff should set high expectations of children's behaviour and have a consistent approach to behaviour management. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.11)
- The registered person should ensure that plans regarding staffing levels, especially at night, are clear, that plans meet the needs of children and enable a flexible response to unexpected events or opportunities. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.15)

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: Suffolk House, 7 Hydra Orion Court, Addison Way,
Great Blakenham, Ipswich IP6 0LW

Responsible individual: Anna Boulton

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Ashley Hinson, Social Care Inspector

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