

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 on 17 January 2022.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 October 2022

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 requires improvement to be good

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: 21 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/01/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/04/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

At the time of the inspection, six children were due to have an overnight stay. Five children stayed overnight but one child's stay was rearranged, due to staff shortages. This is a sudden change for children who are expecting to visit and require routine-based care.

The staff use individual communication methods for each child; however, the opportunities for children to express their opinions are limited. Staff do not routinely gather feedback from the children. Consequently, it is unclear how staff respond to children's views or how children contribute to making decisions about their lives.

The staff use monitoring devices at night when children are in their bedrooms. Consent forms are not held on every child's files. Therefore, it is unclear whether permission has been granted for these devices. The monitors are on display for other children to see. This lacks regard for children's privacy.

Some improvements have been made to the garden. Garden furniture and swing seats have been purchased. However, the garden is poorly maintained with uneven patio slabs and slippery surfaces. These pose hazards for children who enjoy being outside.

Several bedrooms have been redecorated and new flooring has been laid throughout the home. New shower equipment has been purchased. One of the refurbished bathrooms has a strong, unpleasant odour coming from the drains, which sometimes permeates throughout the building.

Feedback from parents is mixed. Most parents say that they would like better communication. Concerns were raised over the high staff turnover. One parent said that they would like to be introduced to new staff, as they want to know who they are handing their child over to. Parents say that their children are safe and happy when they come to stay. Generally, parents report that their children are involved in activities at the home and make good use of the sensory room. However, parents say that they would like to see their children have a wider range of experiences and trips out.

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

On one occasion, the staff have failed to follow basic safeguarding procedures and take appropriate action in response to a safeguarding concern. In addition, leaders and managers have failed to follow up the staff's lack of action in supervision sessions and team meetings. Consequently, staff have not been reminded of their responsibilities to safeguard vulnerable children.

Children have care plans and risk assessments. Some of these plans are contradictory in the guidance for staff. One child's risk assessment has conflicting information about the child's dietary needs, which is inconsistent with their care plan. Therefore, the staff are not fully informed of a child's dietary requirements.

Induction for new staff requires improvement. New staff have not received training that equips them to provide safe and effective care for children. Staff who have no previous experience in a care setting have not received safeguarding disabled children training as a priority. Consequently, staff do not have sufficient awareness and understanding of how to safeguard disabled children.

The manager fails to implement safe recruitment processes. Records show that gaps in employment have not been explored for new staff. This lack of scrutiny has left children at risk of being cared for by unsuitable adults.

Positive behaviour plans are clearly written and contain strategies for staff to follow. Consistent responses from staff have led to a reduction in unwanted behaviours.

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

The manager has been absent for several months, due to illness. During this time, the deputy manager and responsible individual have provided management cover. The manager returned to work in September 2022.

The records of staff training are unclear. Managers use an electronic recording system. However, the system fails to show which staff have received training or whether their training requires updating. Therefore, it is unclear whether staff have the necessary training to meet the needs of the children.

There is a lack of scrutiny of the children's records and care plans. Some documents are not current or complete and some contain inaccurate information. This means that staff are unaware of some information about the children.

Most staff receive supervision. However, supervision records are brief and do not evidence how supervision helps staff to consider how to best meet children's needs. A failure to provide good-quality supervision means that opportunities to encourage staff development are missed.

Although the staff say that they work well together as a team, staff morale is low. The support from managers is not always available, and managers are not visible or accessible. Response from the on-call manager is reported to be slow at times. Staff risk assessments have not been reviewed, which leaves staff at risk of potential harm. Consequently, staff feel unsupported and are not receiving the support and guidance that they need to meet the complex needs of the children.

The responsible individual has undertaken an internal quality of care review. However, the review fails to include any feedback from children, parents or professionals. The review does not identify actions to improve the care. These shortfalls limit the effectiveness of the report.

The independent person visits monthly; however, these visits do not consistently include feedback from children and parents.

Since the last inspection, one of the requirements has been met. Three requirements are not met and are restated.

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 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 and address the drain odour.	25 November 2022
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))	25 November 2022

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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies; 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)(vi)(vii)(b)) In particular, ensure that staff have the knowledge and understanding to safeguard disabled children. This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	25 November 2022
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;	25 November 2022

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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(d)) In particular: 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 appropriate numbers of staff on each shift to meet the needs of children. This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the child’s placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child’s need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(d)) In particular, ensure that consents for the use of monitoring devices are obtained and that they do not intrude on children’s privacy.	25 November 2022
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;	25 November 2022

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 before the employee commences work.	
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. The registered person must ensure that all employees— 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)(b)(c)) This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	25 November 2022
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2)(a))	25 November 2022
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 children.	20 December 2022

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").
(Regulation 45 (2)(a)(b)(c) (3))

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 14.4)

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

Inspector

Rachel Watkinson, Social Care Inspector

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