

1258276

Registered provider: Achieving Aspirations Community Interest Company

Assurance 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 in January 2022.

Inspection date: 27 February 2023

Date of last inspection: 25 October 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

The manager is developing systems to help children express how they are feeling. Feedback forms enable children to communicate their likes and dislikes. This helps staff to better understand children's needs and make suitable changes to their care. However, a clear approach to helping children make choices has not been developed, which prevents staff learning from children's views.

The staff use monitoring devices for children when they are asleep in their bedrooms. Consent forms are now in place. The system is now more discreet because the staff use handheld devices to observe the children. This ensures that children maintain their privacy and dignity.

The home is bright and airy. The bedrooms are being decorated with child-friendly themes. The hallway is being redecorated, with paintings of children's characters and sensory items on the walls. The bathroom is fresh and clean. However, the patio slabs in the garden have not been replaced, and this causes a potential hazard for the children.

The safety of children

The manager responded swiftly to an allegation made about a member of staff. The local authority designated officer and Ofsted were notified of the incident. An internal investigation was carried out. However, the member of staff did not report the concern immediately, and although this was raised by the manager, it highlights the risks associated with the staff's lack of safeguarding awareness.

The staff have completed core training and developed their skills in meeting the individual needs of the children. The staff undertake training in a range of healthcare procedures, with some staff having had training in safeguarding disabled children. However, not all staff have completed this. Consequently, staff do not have sufficient awareness and understanding of how to safeguard disabled children.

The manager has implemented a safe recruitment process. Two members of staff are due to start working at the home in the next few weeks. However, their recruitment documents were not available for review. Therefore, it is difficult to evidence that the recruitment process has improved.

Staff closely monitor children and record any injuries that they sustain. However, there is not a clear process for staff to record how they have shared this information with parents.

The staff have developed their skills in identifying concerns for the children's welfare and raising their concerns with the manager and the children's social worker. The staff ensure that observations of injuries are recorded well and are reported to the child's social worker. This intervention has helped to protect two children from harm and to make significant changes to their care plans.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The manager and the responsible individual understand the importance of external monitoring systems. They have recruited a new independent person to improve the quality of external monitoring. This helps the manager to make improvements to children's care.

The staff now benefit from a training coordinator who has worked closely with the manager and the deputy manager to ensure that staff training records are clear. This ensures that staff training is effective and that gaps in training are identified swiftly.

The regularity and content of staff supervision meetings have improved. The manager is implementing new ways of recording informal supervisions so that any discussions with staff are clearly recorded. Supervisors have undertaken training and received support to develop their approach to supervising staff. This has resulted in supervisions being more effective and useful for staff. The manager has not yet reviewed staff appraisals, therefore this remains an area for improvement.

The manager acknowledged a complaint and dealt with it appropriately. The social worker was informed and said that the complaint had been resolved and they were satisfied with the outcome. However, the details of the actions taken were not recorded clearly in the child's file.

Staff morale has improved. The staff say that they work well together and that staff relationships are positive. One member of staff said that there have been changes in the staff team which have resulted in a more positive and committed team.

New staff have been recruited. However, there are still times when children's overnight stays are rearranged because of staff shortages. This can cause confusing changes to children's planned routines.

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

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— 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.	1 April 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	1 May 2023

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. (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 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 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 and are available.	1 May 2023

The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. 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 (1)(a) (4)(c)) This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	1 May 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))	1 May 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—	1 May 2023

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 odour from the drain.	
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. 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))	1 May 2023

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. In particular, clearly record outcomes of children’s complaints and ensure that information provided to parents about any injuries to children are clearly recorded. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 64, paragraph 14.4)

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

Laraine Edmondson, Social Care Inspector

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