

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 home is run by a small private organisation. It provides residential short breaks for a maximum of five children at any one time and shared 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: 28 and 29 May 2024

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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 June 2023

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
05/06/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/10/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of inspection, there were five children staying at the home. The home provides shared-care arrangements for six children, while other children have short breaks.

Eight children have started to have short breaks or shared care since the last full inspection. Before the child's first stay a detailed assessment is undertaken to reflect their needs. Children and parents visit the home and this can include mealtime visits. The staff offer an option of video calls to reduce children's anxieties. This sensitive and thoughtful introduction has helped the children settle in well.

Children have developed positive relationships with staff. The staff know the children well. The exchanges between staff and children are warm. This gives children a sense of stability, which is beneficial to their emotional development.

Parents are exceptionally positive about the quality of care. They feel confident that staff are suitably trained and experienced to meet their child's needs. Parents are pleased with the communication and updates that they receive from staff. The recent introduction of instant messaging technology allows staff to send messages and share images quickly with parents, and vice versa.

Children enjoy an exciting and wide range of activities, in the home and the community with staff support. Trips to the coast, restaurants and local zoos help to widen children's social experiences. These activities extend children's interests and give them opportunities that they have not had previously.

Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated. Scrap books and photos capture the children's activities. Parents are kept informed of what the children have achieved during their short breaks.

Communication aids are visible throughout the home. Staff use symbols and picture exchange systems to communicate with the children. Staff use social stories and visual timetables with the children to share information, reassure them and to reinforce messages. Therefore, children are supported and encouraged to make their wishes and feelings known at every opportunity.

There have been several changes to the decor of the home and the garden. The bathrooms have been improved and re-decoration throughout the home has made it brighter and more welcoming. The wheelchair accessible swing and interactive play equipment have been a great success with the children. However, some soft furnishings and sofas need replacing. These worn items detract from an otherwise homely environment.

The children's guide is not consistently provided in a child-friendly and accessible format. Therefore, children who are unable to read are not fully informed of important information.

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

Parents have trust and confidence that the staff advocate for their children's best interests, safety and well-being. Staff provide individualised and consistent routines that help children to feel secure.

The established staff are well trained and understand effective safeguarding practice. These staff receive training about safeguarding disabled children and are aware of the children's additional vulnerabilities. However, this training is not provided quickly enough for new staff.

Incidents are managed well. Staff ensure calm and consistent responses when children are distressed, offering support and reassurance to minimise harm to themselves and others. Restraint is used as a last resort to keep children and others safe. The children are supported by staff who know them well and use the strength of their relationships to gently help the children to reduce negative coping strategies.

Safer recruitment processes for new staff are comprehensively carried out, to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

Children's risk assessments and behaviour management plans provide staff with detailed risk-reduction strategies. However, one child's records do not include the most recent education, health and care plan (EHCP). Additionally the child's risk assessment has not been updated following an incident. Therefore, staff are not kept fully informed of situation that a child may need support with.

Staff are not aware of their roles in the event of evacuation at night. Children's personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEP) do not provide clear guidance and strategies for staff to follow. In addition, children are not routinely involved in fire evacuations. These shortfalls mean that children and staff do not know what to do in the event of a fire at night.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A dedicated and experienced management team leads the home. Managers and staff have positive relationships with parents and professionals. Parents and professionals recognise the positive difference that shared care and short breaks have made to the children's lives.

The managers have established a stable and experienced staff team. Staff enjoy working at the home. Children benefit from consistent and familiar staff at the home each day. This helps children to feel safe and secure.

The managers have a detailed knowledge and good understanding of the children's needs. Professionals are regularly updated. Children benefit from the manager's approach to cohesive, multi-agency working.

Staff are positive about the managers and said they feel supported both personally and professionally. They receive regular supervision sessions and annual appraisals of their performance. Staff benefit from regular opportunities to discuss their well-being and professional development.

Team meetings are child-focused and support staff to develop their understanding and practice. However, the meetings are held infrequently. A lack of regular team meetings means that staff miss opportunities to share information, raise issues and learn from others.

Induction for new staff is not effective. 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 the protection needs of disabled children.

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, The 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
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) In particular, ensure that staff are aware of their roles during fire evacuations, children's personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) are clearly written, and children are aware of and involved (if appropriate) in emergency evacuation drills.	10 July 2024
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. (Regulation 33 (1)(a)) In particular, ensure that new staff receive prompt safeguarding disabled children awareness training and a thorough induction.	10 July 2024
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (2)(b)(iv)(vii)) In particular, ensure that children's risk assessments are updated following significant incidents and children's case	10 July 2024

records include updated EHCP plans. In addition, ensure that damaged sofas and soft furnishings are replaced.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all information included in the children's guide is provided in an accessible format and explained to each child to make sure they understand it. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.21)
- The registered person should ensure that the team provides high-quality care for all children living at the home. In particular, ensure there are regular team meetings to support staff and discuss areas of practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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