

2555505

Registered provider: Aspiration House Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home is registered to provide care for up to four children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and/or atypical autism, learning disabilities, global development disorder and associated difficulties.

The home registered in April 2020.

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.

We last visited this setting in December 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Serious and widespread concerns were identified at that visit. This led to enforcement action.

There is an acting manager in post who is not yet registered.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 September 2021

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: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection:

As a result of safeguarding concerns, the home's registration was suspended from 18 December 2020 to 12 March 2021. All three children who were living at the home at the time of the assurance visit and subsequent suspension in December 2020 moved to alternative homes. Two monitoring visits were carried out during the period of suspension on 4 February 2021 and on 9 March 2021.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not previously inspected		
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make progress in all areas of their lives. A manager from a placing authority stated, 'The placement for both children is fantastic... I am in awe of what they have achieved in a relatively short period of time.' A parent of one child stated that her child is thriving in this placement and is doing extremely well. Feedback from an independent reviewing officer for both children was similarly positive.

Children attend education at the on-site school. Reports indicate that they are making progress and engaging well. One child had not been able to attend or engage in education for some considerable time before moving to this home. His attendance and engagement in education now is extremely positive. Staff and managers from the home work very closely with teaching staff and provide a sensitive and needs-led approach to re-engaging children in education.

The health needs of children are well known and well met. Staff ensure that children receive specialist support in a timely manner. This has included prompt engagement with, and referrals being made to, the local child and adolescent mental health services. Support has been sought and followed from the occupational therapist for one child, from their previous education placement. There are plans to reduce the medication for one child in due course. This reflects the progress he has made since moving to this home and a consensus with health professionals that changes are now appropriate.

Children get to see and keep in touch with family and significant others in their life. Staff support children with transport and the use of social media to ensure that children have quality time with people they care about. A placing authority praised the staff for their flexibility and willingness to take children to see family members. Family members feel fully involved in all aspects of children's lives and have confidence in staff to support them to keep in touch.

Children are regularly consulted with about the care and the support they receive. Staff use a wide range of methods to elicit the wishes, the views and the feelings of children. Children have influenced the care and the support they receive, such as meal and activity planning. They feel able to express themselves and know how to make a complaint if they are not happy about any aspect of their care.

There is clear evidence of children making progress and in staff understanding their complex needs extremely well. Excellent pre-placement matching has undoubtedly helped with this. Staff and managers visited both children before they moved to this home. Careful transition planning has included visits/meetings with previous carers and education providers. Children have been supported to visit the home before they moved in.

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

Children are protected from all forms of harm and abuse. Detailed risk assessments outline any known or potential risks. These are regularly updated to reflect incidents and any arising concerns. Staff demonstrate competence in understanding the potential triggers for children and in sensitively responding to their complex needs.

There have been no missing-from-care incidents for either child placed in this home. Detailed missing-from-care protocols include the actions staff should take in the event children were to go missing. High-staffing ratios provide children with the necessary support and supervision at all times, including during the night.

Staff use a range of communication tools and social stories to support children. They demonstrate flexibility in adapting and changing plans and risk assessments to better meet children's needs. The placing authority for both children reports high levels of satisfaction in how potentially risky or dangerous behaviours have been addressed. There has been a noticeable reduction in such behaviours for both children in a short period of time. This is attributable to the tenacity and commitment of staff and managers.

Recruitment procedures for staff are robust and clear. There is evidence of good management and human resources oversight in all aspects of the assessment and recruitment checks for new staff. This prevents unsuitable adults from being able to work and to care for vulnerable children.

There has been one allegation raised by a child. This was dealt with by managers in a timely manner. Referrals were made to the child's social worker and the designated officer. Appropriate action was taken to ensure the safety of the child and also in supporting staff involved. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and in what action they should take, if a child reports or exhibits any concerns about staff.

The use of physical restraint is minimal and is undertaken by appropriately trained and competent staff/managers. A recommendation has been set in relation to debrief meetings with children who have been subject of a restraint. This is in order to consider ensuring that a staff member who was not involved in a restraint carries out the debrief, wherever possible. This will provide children with an opportunity to openly express their experience of being restrained and raise any issues or concerns they may have.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The previous registered manager resigned earlier this year. The former deputy manager has taken on the role of manager and is in the process of applying to Ofsted to register. She has many years of experience working with children and adults with learning disabilities. She is currently undertaking her level 5 management diploma.

Staff receive a detailed and comprehensive induction on starting at the home. They report feeling well supported by the manager and the responsible individual. They receive a wide range of training and development opportunities to increase their skills and competence.

Staff receive regular formal supervision from either the manager or one of the team leaders. They report this being extremely valuable. They also report having daily contact with managers, where they can share any concerns or worries. Staff feel listened to and involved in all aspects of how the home is run.

The manager has commendable insight and understanding of the children in her care. She has utilised her previous work experience to ensure that children receive individualised care and support. She and the staff team can articulate the progress made by children. They celebrate the successes of the children and are proud of their achievements. The placing authority for both children is extremely happy with the care that children receive and the regular communication that they have with staff. This view is also echoed by parents of children.

The manager has, in a relatively short period of time in post, considered and made improvements to recording and to management oversight systems. She is working closely with their independent visitor, who comes to the home once a month. The manager considers any recommendations from the independent visitor reports and takes necessary action.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that following the use of restraint with a child, the child is given the opportunity to express their feelings about the experience. This should preferably be carried out by a staff member not involved in the restraint. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)

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: 2555505

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Aspiration House Ltd

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, 9 Portland Street, Manchester M1 3BE

Responsible individual: Danielle Betts

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Tracy Murty, Social Care Inspector

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