

2571630

Registered provider: Aspire 2 Be Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care for up to three children. The provider states in their statement of purpose that they provide high-quality care and substitute parenting for children who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted on 8 January 2021, and the registered manager has been in post since that time.

There was one child living at the home at the time of this inspection. Since the last inspection, four children have moved on from the home.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2023

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	requires improvement to be good
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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: 12 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/10/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The home environment requires improvement. There was a leak in the bathroom that caused some damage to the kitchen ceiling. The stair carpet is worn in places, and the lounge and landing windows are covered in frosted film which takes away from the homely or domestic feel to the home. There are locks on communal area doors, and although the locks are not used, they add to the feeling of the home being institutional and uninviting.

The decor in the child's bedroom does not reflect their age or personality. The child told inspectors that they had been given the option to choose soft furnishings to personalise their bedroom, however, they had not been given the opportunity to choose new decor. Children's use of the communal dining area is limited as it is used by staff as an office space.

Children are encouraged to attend education. Inspectors saw examples of effective challenge on behalf of children. However, education plans are not always clear when children move into the home. Some children have spent significant periods of time out of education. One child is not supported to supplement their home tuition with meaningful educational activities. This does not ensure that children's educational needs are met, and it impacts on their ability to develop their life skills.

Some children who have engaged in risky behaviours, including criminality and substance misuse, have moved out of the home in an unplanned way after only living there for short periods of time. This does not demonstrate that children are provided with stability.

Children are routinely registered with universal health services and their health needs are met. Children are supported and encouraged to think about their health and the impact of lifestyle choices. Key-work sessions focus on relevant issues, such as smoking and sexual health. This supports children to understand the importance of good healthcare and encourages them to take responsibility for their lifestyle choices and health needs. The system for the recording of medication is not clear.

The culturally diverse staff team understands children's individual cultural and identity needs. Children are encouraged to follow cultural and religious practices if they wish to do so. Halal meat is available to children. Children are supported to participate in activities they find meaningful and interesting, such as visiting football stadiums and go-karting. These activities are documented in memory books for children. This helps them feel accepted, understood and valued.

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

The poor matching of children has impacted on children's relationships and resulted in some aggression between them. However, staff identified and responded to potential issues of bullying and grooming among children. There are no risk assessments for group-living arrangements or for the impact of children's behaviour on each other.

Staff use a handheld electronic device to perform bodily checks on children each time they come into the home. The device is used to detect metal objects, such as knives. However, the device is not effective and it has not prevented children from bringing knives into the home. Staff are not trained in how to use the device. Managers do not continually assess the effectiveness of the device to ensure its use is required, appropriate and proportionate. Furthermore, information about the use of the device, to inform children and other relevant individuals, is not included in the children's guide or the home's statement of purpose.

The ecomaps are helpful diagrams to help staff to identify the risks factors but as a standalone document, they do not provide a clear picture of how to keep children safe or inform children's risk assessments and safety plans. Children's risk assessments and safety plans are complicated and, lengthy documents that require streamlining. These documents do not clearly identify risks to children or the action that staff need to take to help them manage and reduce risks. Not all staff are able to locate relevant documents, such as missing-from-care protocols for children and the online safety policy. Some staff struggled to direct inspectors as to where to find the documents when asked. For some children, risks have increased, and some children have engaged in high-risk, antisocial behaviour. This demonstrates that identified risk management strategies are not effective.

There have been two incidents of restraint. One event was recorded as an incident and not a restraint despite a staff member physically intervening to separate two children involved in an argument. Not all staff have been trained in restraint procedures. The home adopts two different restraint practices.

Staff talk to children about online safety to raise their awareness of the potential risks of the internet. However, until recently, staff did not routinely carry out mobile phone and game console checks. The risk assessment for a child who had a history of sexual exploitation did not consider all the risk factors for mobile phone use or include details about how the phone would be monitored. There was no evidence of key-work sessions taking place to help the child understand and manage the risks. Therefore, the child continued to be at risk of sexual exploitation.

The manager has reviewed the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises; however, the location risk assessment includes outdated crime statistics. The manager has not consulted with and considered the views of each relevant person. This potentially means that the manager and staff may not know about all the current concerns and risks in the local area.

There has been a high number of safeguarding incidents since the last inspection. The manager has worked well with key agencies, including the police, in response to safeguarding incidents. When necessary, the manager has escalated her concerns effectively. However, one incident that required police assistance was not reported to Ofsted in line with regulation.

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

The manager ensures that any concerns in staff practice are discussed and addressed in supervision. However, not all staff, including new staff undergoing induction, receive supervision on a regular basis.

Staff do not have specialist training in criminal exploitation, gangs and knife crime that would help them to gain a broader understanding of the children they care for.

The independent monthly monitoring of the home does not routinely take place, and the reports of independent monitoring are not provided to Ofsted as required. Reports do not routinely include the views of children and stakeholders. The recommended actions raised by the independent person do not always reflect the shortfalls identified and the action required to improve practice. This compromises the provider's ability to keep children safe and promote their well-being. Additionally, Ofsted is not able to monitor the well-being and safety of children effectively.

The information in safeguarding notifications and the review of quality of care reports is not focused and concise. Overviews contain detailed narratives of events, meaning that the focus on the impact for children is often lost. Consequently, the review of risks and planning for children is not always timely or clear, and plans do not always clearly reflect the actions required to keep children safe.

The registered manager has a clear vision for the home and what she wants to achieve for children. She has high aspirations for children and is a good advocate for them. The manager is ambitious and is in the early stages of integrating a therapeutic approach to practice. Staff receive high-quality clinical supervision in using the therapeutic approach to enhance their understanding of the children's behavioural and emotional needs. This relatively new approach is yet to be consistently embedded into practice.

The registered manager is proactive and challenges staff and other professionals when practice falls short or does not match her aspirations for children. Professionals and partner agencies recognise the advocacy and positive challenge provided by the manager and the benefits these have for 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, 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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e))	28 February 2023

In particular, ensure that staff have the required knowledge through specialised training. Ensure that assessments are streamlined to identify children's risks, and that impact risk assessments evaluate group-living dynamics.	
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 work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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; and 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)(b)(c)(e)(f)(h))	28 February 2023
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—	28 February 2023

that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))	
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(d)) This refers to the use of an electronic handheld device to perform bodily checks on children.	28 February 2023
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. 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; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))	28 February 2023

In particular, the independent person's reports must be provided to Ofsted in a timely manner.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the statement of purpose and the children's guide appropriately reflect the service provided to children in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.56)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. Children should have tidy bedrooms and the opportunity to personalise their bedrooms. Communal areas, such as the dining area, should be used solely for the purpose of children enjoying their space. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure, under Regulation 23, that medicines are only administered in line with an approved protocol. Records must be kept of the administration of all medication, with a clear system for recording medication. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure that internal door locks are removed so that children can move freely within the home. Internal door locks that restrict a child's liberty of movement are classed as a restraint and should be recorded as such and be approved. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.42)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have access to specialist training to help them provide additional support to children and to support their professional development. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children when they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans, and when they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should ensure that notifications of serious incidents under Regulation 40 (4) are submitted to Ofsted as required and in a timely manner. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

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: 2571630

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Aspire 2 Be Limited

Responsible individual: David Whitty

Registered manager: Ngozi Oranu

Inspectors

Kamal Bhamra, Social Care Inspector
Tom McGhee, Social Care Inspector

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