

2571630

Registered provider: Aspire 2 Be Ltd

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 are a short-term specialist service providing emergency interventions. Additionally, they may also consider long-term placements for children.

The home was registered with Ofsted on 8 January 2021. The registered manager has been registered since 18 December 2020 and is enrolled on a course to obtain the relevant residential leadership and management qualification.

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.

This inspection was conducted on site and involved meetings with children and staff. Feedback was received from social care and youth services' professionals as well as parents. A staff questionnaire was also shared with staff who were not on site but wished to contribute their views.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 October 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, there was one child living in the home. The inspectors also considered the experiences of one child who had recently lived in the home.

Staff work with children who have highly complex needs. Clear working agreements are made with children and their network which ensures that children's individual needs are met. This allows children to make mistakes within a supportive and non-judgemental environment.

Children are making good progress. Staff understand children's starting points and measure progress in small steps. Both formal and informal key-work sessions are used to address known and developing concerns for children. Consequently, staff attempt to understand children and the world from their perspective.

Staff work hard to reduce episodes of children going missing from the home. They try to dissuade children from going missing but if they do, staff actively look for them, maintain contact and encourage them to return with reminders of familiar routines. This shows children that their continued safety is important.

Children have access to universal health services. All children are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians. Children are supported to attend virtual appointments with specialist services when needed. Staff work closely with educational services to ensure children's regular attendance at school or participation in home learning. As a result, children's life chances are significantly improved.

Staff regularly seek children's wishes and feelings. Children choose their activities such as visits to theme parks, cinema trips and bowling. Children are encouraged to attend their house meetings and share their views. However, the response from the registered manager and staff to children's views is not always clear or fed back to children

Children are helped to prepare for their futures. They are supported with learning independent living skills such as self-care, budgeting and cooking. Children have access to a digital online platform that helps them to practise life skills. Staff work closely with children to help them to successfully move on from the home. Therefore, children grow in confidence to make positive changes in their lives.

Children develop positive relationships with staff. Children reported that they feel comfortable and safe at the home. They also say that they like the informal approach taken to discussions on important topics. Although seen as informal conversations, staff document these and thus there is a lasting record for children in the future.

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

Risk assessments are started prior to children arriving at the home. Leaders and managers seek valuable information about children from other professionals, the child themselves and their parents and carers. This ensures that the staff have detailed knowledge about how to provide the best care to children.

Leaders and managers use information about children to manage their individual risks. Staff use their observations and developing relationships with children to understand all areas of risk. These are clearly documented, regularly updated and show strategies for staff to use when responding to children. This means that there is a united approach to keeping children safe.

Managers have clear and effective responses when working with children who are missing from home or at risk of harm. Each child has a safety plan which is regularly updated and followed by staff. If there are significant concerns about children's friendships and acquaintances, staff develop tools to map names, places and events. Consequently, staff have a better understanding of the risks for the children and can implement safeguarding measures.

Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding arrangements are appropriate to ensure that children are safe from harm. Agreed information is openly and routinely shared with the children's professional network and family. Appropriate referrals are made to the safeguarding lead and safeguarding notifications are made to Ofsted. This enables strong partnership working which helps to minimise the risks to children.

Staff offer children clear and consistent boundaries. They use team meetings, group supervision, a team communication book and discussions to agree consistent responses to children's behaviour in the home. Leaders and managers hold emergency team meetings, when needed, to remind staff to follow agreed protocols and procedures. This means that staff give children clear messages that promotes their health and well-being.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers are aware of the strengths and areas for improvement in their service. The provider was clear that the recruitment and retention of staff is an ongoing challenge. In response, the provider has limited the number of children living in the home to ensure that staff are always available to meet children's needs.

Leaders and managers have responded well to the needs of the children in their care. Information about the service and how staff work has evolved so that the focus is on providing children with a home for the longer term. The provider is aware that information, for commissioners of the service, needs to be adapted to fit current practice.

Leaders and managers have high expectations for children. The children's guide informs children about how staff will help and support them in the home but does not specify some of the actions that staff will take. The guide is not fully accessible for younger children. This means that not all children will be clear on what it means to live in this home.

Staff have good quality professional relationships with others. Professionals from the social care and youth services stated that staff regularly update them and work hard to manage risks. A parent spoke about feeling included in her child's care and felt that her child had made good progress in the home. However, staff are not consistent in escalating their concerns if other professionals do not fulfil their roles effectively. As a result, children are not always given full access to the range of services available to them.

Staff feel supported in the home. New members of staff have a thorough and clear induction. Team meetings occur regularly, and staff discuss matters relating to children. Staff reported that they receive regular supervision from managers. Additionally, there is a consultant psychotherapist who also offers team and individual supervision. However, leaders and managers do not provide clarity on when staff need to complete the required training or refresher training. The information included in the workforce plan is limited. Additionally, the provider does not ensure that staff have completed, or are enrolled to complete, the required qualification for their role within the correct timeframe.

The staff team is diverse and reflective of children in this inner-city borough. The registered manager is clear that the staff team allow for every child to feel welcomed, comfortable and accepted. Children's care is prioritised and during the COVID-19 pandemic some staff offered stability to children by self-isolating with them in the home for 10 days.

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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b)) In particular, this relates to the provider ensuring that staff have, or are enrolled on, the required qualification within the correct timeframe.	15 December 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the statement of purpose appropriately reflects the service provided to children in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15 paragraph 3.5)

- The registered person should ensure that the children's guide is accessible to all children and that information is clear. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 24 paragraphs 4.21 and 4.22)
- The registered person should ensure that they challenge and escalate concerns to the placing authority or another relevant person as required to ensure that children's need are met. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 12 paragraph 2.8)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 53 paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards' page 22 paragraph 4.11)

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 Ltd

Responsible individual: David Whitty

Registered manager: Ngozi Oranu

Inspectors

Tolulope Sawyerr, Social Care Inspector
Christine Kennett, 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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