

2650950

Registered provider: Alternative Approach Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned by a private organisation. The provider states in its statement of purpose that it provides care for up to two children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

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: 27 July 2022

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
27/07/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There are two children living in the home. Staff spend time getting to know children when they move in. As a result, children develop positive and trusting relationships with staff. The matching processes for new children moving into the home are thorough. This is the same for children who move in at short notice.

Staff support children well in respect of their cultural needs and religious beliefs. Staff support them in attending local places of worship and shopping for food from their home country. For one child whose first language is not English, documents have been translated, and staff have found private language courses. As a result, he has made good progress in this area. One social work professional commented, 'Staff have gone above and beyond to meet his language and cultural needs.'

Staff promote positive relationships between the children through shared activities and experiences. The children enjoy activities and trips together. They have a positive relationship with each other. Children are supported to develop new interests and hobbies. One child has developed a keen interest in boxing and now attends a local boxing club four times a week. Staff have supported him to also attend a volleyball club, which he enjoys as it is the national sport for his country of origin. These activities have also supported him to make new friends.

The manager is a strong advocate for children's education. He has been persistent in challenging professionals when there are delays in children accessing appropriate educational settings. One child has made significant progress in engaging with education. Prior to this, he did not attend school for a number of years.

Children are supported to lead healthy lifestyles. Staff support children to attend health appointments. Staff understand children's barriers and anxieties when accessing health services. They support children through direct work to overcome their anxieties.

Children spend time with family and friends on a regular basis. Direct work with children on healthy relationships supports them to make positive choices in relation to friendships. This has a positive impact on their emotional well-being.

Children feel listened to and involved in the daily running of the home. Staff value their feedback, which is obtained through meetings and individual sessions.

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

Children feel happy and safe living in the home. Staff have a good understanding of children's risks and vulnerabilities. They have a strong understanding of children's needs and how to keep them safe. Consequently, risks are being reduced for both children.

Children's risk assessments include clear guidance for staff to follow. However, these records do not demonstrate how individual risks are assessed. Furthermore, behaviour management plans do not include strategies for staff to follow to manage specific behaviours.

Incidents of children being missing from home have been reduced. When incidents do occur, staff manage them well and actively look for children. There is clear guidance for staff to follow in practice. Staff are proactive in addressing risks for children in the community. As a result of staff action, legal restrictions were imposed on one child's acquaintance, which has helped reduce risk. However, some recordings of incidents lack detail about the action staff have taken, and debriefs with children have not been recorded.

There have been no incidents of children being physically held. There is a shared consensus among the staff team that de-escalation techniques should be a priority to prevent the need for staff to physically hold children. Staff are trained in physical intervention techniques. However, there are discrepancies in the model of physical intervention training between the staff and the manager.

Staff undertake meaningful work with children relevant to their needs. Staff are proactive in addressing emerging risks. Safeguarding incidents are managed well. As a result of the support provided to one child, there has been a clear reduction in all risks. Staff adopt a therapeutic model of care in their daily interactions with the children. However, not all staff, including the manager, have undertaken formal training in relation to this.

Children's progress is recorded daily. The manager has implemented changes to reflect and record children's daily lives and experiences in a more child-focused way.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There has been a change in management since the previous inspection. The new manager is not yet registered. However, he has submitted his application to Ofsted.

The manager works hard to create a warm and homely environment for the children. However, areas of the home appear tired and could benefit from some refurbishment.

Since starting in the home, the manager has implemented several changes to the care being provided to the children. Staff say that these have been positive. He has a clear vision of how to further improve staff practice. He is committed to children

always receiving a high standard of care. Professionals involved with the children speak highly of the manager. One professional commented, '[Name of manager] has gone above and beyond in sorting out education for [name of child].'

Children are cared for by a small but established staff team. At times of shortfalls in staffing, consistent agency staff are used to minimise the impact on children. However, to ensure continuity and stability for children, additional permanent relief staff have been recruited to cover any future shortfalls in staffing.

Staff say they feel supported. The manager is approachable, and staff views and feelings are listened to and respected. Staff benefit from regular reflective supervision and team meetings. The manager uses these forums to share best practice models and research-informed practice. The introduction of workforce champions has empowered staff to lead in areas where they feel their strengths are.

The manager has good knowledge and understanding of the care being provided to the children on a daily basis. However, this is not consistently reflected in children's records. Missing-from-home and incident records do not include managerial oversight.

The manager values the role of the independent visitor. He is receptive and welcoming to challenge and feedback to identify areas of improvement. However, the independent visitor does not consistently obtain feedback from children, parents or professionals. Internal monitoring of the home is good. The manager has detailed development plans in place that reflect his ambitions for the home moving forward.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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 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)(b)) Specifically, ensure that children's risk assessment and behaviour management plans demonstrate the assessment of risk and include clear strategies to manage specific behaviours.	2 June 2023
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)) Specifically, ensure that the incident recording of missing-from-home episodes includes information of actions taken by staff.	2 June 2023
The leadership and management 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; and understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each	2 June 2023

child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (2)(a)(c)(f)) Specifically, ensure that children's records include clear management oversight and that all staff, including the manager, undertake training specific to children's needs and corresponding physical intervention training.	
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. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a))	2 June 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children and is a homely, domestic environment. Specifically, ensure that the home is decorated and maintained to a high standard. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.9)

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: 2650950

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Alternative Approach Care Limited

Registered provider address: 228 Rice Lane, Liverpool L9 1DJ

Responsible individual: Michael Jeffs

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Claire Hobbs, Social Care Inspector

Kayleigh Treanor, Social Care Inspector

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