

2668789

Registered provider: Apsley Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private provider. The home is registered to care for up to two children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager has made an application to register with Ofsted.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home. Two children have moved out of the home during the inspection period.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 August 2025

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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: 4 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/09/2024	Full	Good
11/10/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

The child currently living at the home had a carefully planned move. The manager worked well with involved professionals to ensure that staff had the information needed to care appropriately for the child. Staff have worked hard to build a trusting relationship with the child and they have settled well. The child is now making progress, particularly with managing their personal hygiene.

Children's care plans include information that helps staff to understand the child's needs in the wider context of their experiences and set out expectations for staff practice. Staff understand the aims of the care while children live at the home. The child receives key-work sessions to support their progress in achieving those aims, and staff speak with children after incidences have occurred.

Children live in a home that is kept to a clean and functional standard. However, it does not feel like a warm or personalised space. This has been recognised by the manager and there are plans in place to address this in the near future.

Some recordings, particularly of incidences, lack detail. This makes it hard to establish the full context of the event or staff's response to it. Recordings lack important information about how children have been comforted or reassured, particularly when they have been upset or raised concerns. Staff have not tried to connect with all children consistently or to fully understand their experiences of living at the home.

Two children who lived at the home together did not always have a positive relationship with each other. Staff were not proactive to try and rebuild or repair this relationship, despite children making complaints about each other. Consequently, there was a missed opportunity to create a better living dynamic for both children.

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

Children are encouraged and supported to engage with specialist services, particularly those that support their mental health. For one child, strategies developed to keep the child calm were well utilised by staff. A parent said that her child has really grown in confidence, and that they both feel proud of the changes that the child made while living at the home.

Children are not regularly physically held in the home. When a child has been held, debriefs with the child have taken place and plans put in place to prevent similar incidents from occurring. Staff learning, particularly when children's plans have not been followed, has been prioritised and ways of working reviewed.

Children's risk management plans are not always clear and lack specific actions that staff needed to follow to keep children safe. Staff have not always followed agreed safety plans for children or been professionally curious when new risks emerged. This meant on several occasions staff did not intervene at the earliest possible point to prevent incidents of self-harm.

When children make complaints or allegations these are not appropriately explored. Concerns raised about staff practice by one child was not explored by the managers. This means concerns are not considered in accordance with agreed protocols to keep children safe. Children are not assured that their voices are listened to or that their concerns are taken seriously. Allegations have not been appropriately notified to Ofsted.

One missing-from-home incident was not responded to by staff appropriately. Staff did not search for the child and did not go to collect them once their location was known. As a result, the child spent the night at an unknown location in the community and at a house where there were known concerns that the child was misusing substances. This put the child's safety at risk and did not offer reassurance to the child that their welfare was important to staff.

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

The manager has been proactive to understand both current and historical risks for children that have lived at the home. She can identify the areas of vulnerability and has plans in place to address these. Staff enjoy working at the home and feel well supported by the manager. They shared that the manager is proactive to explore any disagreements or miscommunication between team members, and this is boosting team morale after a period of change.

The manager has developed a system to identify the areas of development for staff and to ascertain their current understanding on important processes in the home. She has developed ways to monitor progress for the child living in the home, but these are not yet fully imbedded into practice.

Staff support systems have been prioritised, staff have access to regular team meetings, and the manager has been proactive to ensure that bespoke training to meet the needs of the child living at the home was prioritised. Supervision of staff is now occurring, but this has not been offered consistently to all staff.

There have been incidences when the management response has not prioritised children's safety and well-being. The manager has not explored allegations by children appropriately or always challenged staff practice when this was not in line with agreed plans.

There remain gaps in the safer recruitment processes for staff, particularly around understanding staff member's full employment history. This means the manager cannot be assured of the suitability of all staff working at the home.

The management structure of the home is not clear and multiple senior managers have been advising and directing staff. This has been a source of frustration for staff. The responsible individual has not been consistently present at the home and this has caused delay in progressing change. Sufficient support and supervision have not been provided to the managers of the home, particularly during times of challenge.

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
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; 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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) In particular, ensure that risk management and home care plans are in place that identify known and potential risks for each child, and that staff are skilled and confident in challenging and responding to situations when a child may be exposed to risk.	8 September 2025

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; 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; 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)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) In particular, ensure that there is thorough management oversight on safety planning for children, for staff to receive regular supervision and for allegations to be managed and recorded more robustly. The manager must also ensure that safeguarding concerns are notified to Ofsted when required.	8 September 2025
A responsible individual must— have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated. (Regulation 26 (7)(b)) In particular, ensure that the responsible individual has the capacity to provide regular support and oversight to the home to help development and improvement of the standards in the home. It also relates to the need for the manager to be regularly supervised.	8 September 2025

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; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) This requirement is restated from the last inspection.	8 September 2025
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive, and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. Homes must also meet children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Particularly the use of physical intervention. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2668789

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Apsley Care Limited

Registered provider address: 10 Valentine Place, Stanground South, Peterborough
PE2 8WG

Responsible individual: Abel Changa

Registered manager: Vacant

Inspector

Louise Copping, Social Care Inspector

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