

2739596

Registered provider: Aspire Care Cumbria Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider operates this home. It is registered to provide care for up to three children with emotional and social difficulties.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted on 5 December 2023.

At the time of this inspection, one child was living in the home. The child was spoken to by the inspectors.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 September 2025

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: 28 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/05/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a home that staff maintain and adapt according to the child's individual interests. Staff work collectively to create a welcoming and comfortable space where children participate in activities that reflect their preferences.

Staff pay close attention to what children say and demonstrate that they value their thoughts and feelings. They advocate for children when they wish to move on from the home and include them in the interview process for new staff.

Children are encouraged by staff to engage with health services. Children engage in key discussions with staff and receive fact sheets to support their understanding of health issues. Staff are assigned responsibilities in specific areas, such as health and nutrition, that are consistently championed.

The child participates in creative practice by co-leading training about their own condition. Staff demonstrate sensitive curiosity in developing their understanding of the child's health needs, placing the child at the centre of the process. This involvement leads to qualifications for both the child and staff and transforms a medical matter into a shared opportunity to highlight the value of the child's input and strengthening relationships in the process.

Staff support the child to attend their education provision, which has helped them to achieve qualifications. Feedback from a professional and parent highlights that staff are persistent and that the child progresses as a result. The staff are proactive in identifying new placements when the child is not in education. They involve the virtual school to identify and help arrange alternative provisions that are more suited to the child's current needs. When issues arise, the staff remain proactive in their search for an appropriate next placement.

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

When a child goes missing from the home, the staff act quickly to return them as soon and as safely as possible. Staff follow children out of the home, take note of unknown vehicles and contact family and friends. The staff continue contacting the child to check on their welfare and encourage their return. The staff inform the appropriate agencies and liaise between family members, police and the local authority to negotiate a safe outcome when complex safeguarding situations arise.

Staff are vigilant regarding the misuse of substances. When suspicions arise, they speak with the child and conduct room searches to establish facts and ensure safety. Staff offer intervention work, address health concerns and explain the legal implications. This robust response helps the child to make informed choices as they develop.

Staff help children build life skills and broaden their understanding of personal safety. They provide fun, interactive activities that support learning about their surroundings. One child has been helped to link their career ambition to the work they have done with staff around fire safety.

Staff attempt to soothe and comfort children who become distressed. Occasionally, staff who are suitably trained hold children as a safety measure to help to keep them safe. However, leaders do not always scrutinise this practice to ensure that it is proportionate and fair.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The new management team has implemented effective monitoring and reviewing processes that its members use to scrutinise and raise the standard of care that children receive. New systems have been introduced that ensure staff appraisals and supervision sessions are reflective and timely. Leaders and managers address shortfalls in staff practice quickly. Managers conduct one-to-one supervision, raise the issue in team meetings and share updates with individual staff via databases and staff in-trays.

The external monitoring of the home works well to address shortfalls and improve practice. The managers lead by example to create a culture of sharing concerns and act promptly so that staff can see that they are transparent. Managers demonstrate that they act on the independent visitor's suggestions. Managers share these with the staff team to improve staff practices.

Staff communicate well with parents and professionals. The staff provide regular weekly updates to the social workers and parents about the child's progress. When concerns arise, professionals express confidence that staff learn from incidents and adjust their practice to reduce recurrence.

Leaders and managers generally challenge external professionals when they identify practice as an area to improve. However, return home interviews are not always completed in line with statutory guidance. Six return home interviews were completed outside expected timescales in response to the challenge from managers. Six other return home interviews were not completed at all. In one further incident, a child did not receive an interview despite the police being called due to the child's level of vulnerability.

There are gaps in safer recruitment checks. For example, the provider's application form only requires the previous three job roles to be included. Therefore, one staff member does not have a full employment history as part of his application. Interview notes do not explore gaps in employment and managers do not show professional curiosity when there are differences in dates of employment provided. When staff have worked in previous roles involving children or vulnerable adults, there is no evidence that references have been verified as to the reason why they left employment. Without the

appropriate checks in place, staff could be employed who are not suitable to work with 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, The 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 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))	22 October 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

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: 2739596

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Aspire Care Cumbria Limited

Registered provider address: 34 Knowe Road, Carlisle CA3 9EQ

Responsible individual: Lucy Needham

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Lee Riley, Social Care Inspector
Paula Kelly, Social Care Inspector

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