

# SC402385

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

A private company owns this home. It provides care for up to three children aged between eight and 18 years, who may have complex needs, which may include autism spectrum disorder and complex associated difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, there is no registered manager. A manager has been appointed and has applied to register with Ofsted.

Following a period of closure, this home reopened in November 2023. At the time of the inspection, one child lived at the home.

### Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

**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:** 1 February 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** not judged

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 01/02/2022      | Interim         | Not judged                      |
| 16/06/2021      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 07/01/2020      | Full            | Good                            |
| 04/07/2018      | Full            | Good                            |

## Inspection judgements

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

Since the home reopened in November 2023, two children have moved into the home. These moves were well planned, with the children moving from homes within the organisation. At the time of this inspection, one child was living at the home. The other child moved back to their home authority because of concerns about their safety in the community.

Children's progress is varied. For example, one child enjoys and excels in their chosen hobbies. However, the child struggles with their emotional and social well-being, which impacts on their behaviour. The approach of some staff does not help the child to manage their behaviour.

Children do not receive all the support they need to help them to learn. One child maintained good school attendance until they left the home. Another child has been on a reduced timetable since Easter because of concerns about their behaviour. While some staff engage the child in education when the child is at home, this is inconsistent. Poor recording by staff means that it is unclear how the child's learning has been supported when the child is not in school.

Children's health needs are generally met. The manager escalated concerns about one child's health needs to ensure that the child was referred to the appropriate services. As a result, the child has been assessed and there is a plan for them to receive specific support. Staff will also be given support to help them to understand the child's needs.

Children have individual in-house plans. However, they do not contain all the necessary information that is relevant to their care as staff do not consistently review and update them. Furthermore, the staff do not consult children about their plans, nor are they presented in a child-friendly way. Children's meetings do not take place consistently. This limits children's involvement in their day-to-day care and does not help them to understand their progress.

The children spend time with their family and friends with the support of staff. As a result, children maintain important relationships. Staff model to children how to form and maintain positive relationships through establishing a rapport with family members.

The home environment requires attention in some areas. The child has a personalised bedroom. However, other rooms in the house are not well maintained. For example, a bath panel was missing. This was resolved during the inspection. However, it was reported to have been missing for some weeks. The windows of the annex remain boarded up and there is no outdoor play equipment for children as suggested in the home's statement of purpose.

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

Children are not always effectively supported by staff to manage complex behaviour. Some staff have found it challenging to adapt their approach to the needs of one child. As a result, the child receives a varied response from staff, who have used language with the child that is not in keeping with the home's ethos of therapeutic parenting.

Children are not helped by staff to take responsibility for their behaviour and progress. Reward measures are punitive. For example, children are required to be 'respectful' to staff. Expectations for behaviour lack a focus on supporting children's wider progress and development. Furthermore, for one child, a food-based reward does not support healthy eating.

Medication is stored safely. However, guidance about the administration of medicines is not always clearly recorded. For example, one child's medication record does not set out a requirement of the prescription for a break. A lack of clear guidance could lead to medication being incorrectly administered.

Staff respond well when children are missing from the home. For example, staff followed agreed missing-from-care protocols for a child who was at particular risk in the community. In addition, the manager appropriately escalated concerns with a partner agency when their response fell below expectations. This supported the child's safety.

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

The manager is new to the post. The responsible individual has recognised the limitations in the handover and induction given to the manager and is now offering effective support and guidance.

The manager knows the child well. The manager is visible and accessible and has prioritised building relationships with the children and developing positive working relationships with families and partner agencies. Professionals are positive about the manager and his approach.

Management oversight and monitoring is being developed. The manager is aware of what is needed to improve oversight of the home and the care that children receive. He is working hard to develop effective systems and delegate responsibilities to the staff. This includes staff ensuring that children's records and key documents are up to date.

Children have individualised behaviour management guidance and risk assessments. However, these are not always updated to contain necessary information about the

children. Furthermore, it is unclear if staff read the risk assessments. The manager has recognised this is an area of development.

The manager has ensured that the staff are completing identified training to help to increase their skills and knowledge. Professional supervision for staff is regular and the quality of supervision has improved. However, staff have not had an annual appraisal. Some staff have not had the opportunity for an appraisal for two years. The manager has identified the learning and skills needs of the staff team and is working to address these.

Staff have experienced a period of change due to being transferred to this home following the closure of other homes within the organisation. A variation in consultation about this change and merging as a new team has impacted on staff morale. The manager is working hard to be a role model, ensure the well-being of staff, and establish clear expectations for practice across the team.

Staff feedback about the manager is positive. Staff feel motivated and inspired and share joint optimism about the future of the home. One member of staff commented that increased learning opportunities and responsibility have made them feel valued.

There is no consultation with children in the most recent review of care report. Therefore, it is not clear if the children's feedback is effectively used as part of the home's development.

## 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    |
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| <p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;</p> <p>maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement;</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(viii))</p> | 5 July 2024 |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 5 July 2024 |

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| <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(e)(f)(g)(i)(h))</p> |                    |
| <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>5 July 2024</p> |

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| <p>meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;</p> <p>help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;</p> <p>strive to gain each child's respect and trust;</p> <p>understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;</p> <p>are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same;</p> <p>that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others.<br/>(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)<br/>(2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(b))</p> |                    |
| <p>The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>develop positive relationships with them;</p> <p>engage with them; and</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>5 July 2024</p> |

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| take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.<br>(Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c))                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |             |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child.<br/>(Regulation 14 (1) (2)(F))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 5 July 2024 |
| <p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.<br/>(Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b))</p>                                                                                                                                                                 | 24 May 2024 |
| <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>For the purposes of this regulation, "the appropriate person" is the registered person, an officer of HMCI, an officer of the local authority in whose area the home is located or a police officer.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.<br/>(Regulation 33 (1) (3) (4)(a)(b)(c))</p> | 5 July 2024 |
| The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 5 July 2024 |

include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;

are kept up to date; and

are signed and dated by the author of each entry.  
(Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))

## Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Regulation 23 requires the registered person to ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. These are fundamentally the same sorts of arrangements as a good parent would make but are subject to additional safeguards. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)

## 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:** SC402385

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Aspris Children's Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** The Forge, Church Street West, Woking, Surrey GU21 6HT

**Responsible individual:** Emma Jones

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Stacie Sharpe, 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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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