

SC402406

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for three children up to the age of 18 years who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager post has been vacant since 11 May 2023.

Two children live at the home.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 November 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 18 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/10/2022	Full	Good
19/10/2021	Full	Good
05/02/2020	Full	Good
11/07/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

No children have moved in to or out of the home since the last inspection. However, one child has been spending a considerable amount of time with their family and has not returned to the home for several weeks. During the inspection, it was confirmed that the child would be moving to semi-independent accommodation and would not be returning to the home.

The progress that children make is variable. One child is making progress with their personal care and social skills, and now takes care of their personal hygiene without being prompted. This is helped by the trusted relationships that the child is building with staff. However, one child has not made the expected progress in relation to their independence skills. Furthermore, the staff do not always capture in the records or through monitoring the progress that children make.

Staff support children to attend education. One child is engaging well and is benefiting from a programme of agriculturally based learning that is better suited to their learning needs. Another child struggled to settle into college and decided to end the placement. This reduces the scope for the child's continued learning.

The children have individualised care plans. Staff offer children some encouragement to be involved in the development and review of their plans. However, this is not far reaching enough. Consequently, children remain reluctant to contribute. This limits opportunities for children to set personal goals and understand their progress. In addition, staff do not consider all aspects of the children's care when evaluating children's progress and the effectiveness of the care delivered.

There have been no children's meetings since May 2023. This reduces the opportunities for children to express their wishes and feelings about the care that they receive, or to make suggestions for improvement.

Children's bedrooms are personalised to their individual tastes. However, there are areas of the home that require improvement. For example, the home has not had mains heating or hot water for almost three weeks. Alternative arrangements are in place to ensure that heating and hot water are available. In addition, some areas of the home were observed to be cluttered, and an old mattress was seen at the side of the annex. Shortfalls in the physical environment detract from children living in a comfortable and well-equipped environment that easily supports their day-to-day living.

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

The children have individual risk assessments and risk management plans that are reviewed and updated regularly. Staff understand and respond well to risk. For example, staff acted quickly when one child went missing, and completed direct work with the child following the incident. This helped to raise the child's awareness of the risks of going missing. However, staff do not consistently undertake work with children to help them to understand risk. For example, it is unclear how the staff helped one child to understand the risk of unprotected sex.

There have been very few incidents and no use of physical intervention. However, one child has received a high number of sanctions. Managers have reviewed this and identified that some sanctions were not proportionate. Since the new manager has been in post, a more-balanced approach has been adopted and more rewards are being used to encourage positive behaviour.

Bullying between children has been a concern, and staff have completed work with the children to try to address this. However, meaningful work has not been completed with the children to help them to rebuild their relationships.

The approach to rules and boundaries is inconsistent. Staff work in sub-teams and this contributes to children receiving inconsistent responses in relation to the expectations for behaviour. Inconsistent messages have the potential to make children feel unsafe. The manager has started to address this.

Following the identification of a serious medication error by the previous manager, action has been taken to improve the system for the administration of medication. The new system is effective and there have been no further errors. Furthermore, all staff revisited their medication training to help to improve their vigilance.

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

The interim manager is suitably skilled and experienced and has been in post for several weeks. She has recently shared with her manager that she is unable to register as planned. However, she is staying in the post until a permanent manager is recruited. This creates further instability for children as she is the third manager that has been in post this year. Despite this, she has quickly identified shortfalls and is implementing the changes needed to improve children's care.

The manager has prioritised building positive relationships with the children, their families and the professionals involved in their care. The manager offers good professional challenge and advocacy when children are not getting the support and resources that they need. Professionals are positive about the communication with staff.

The manager has identified that monitoring systems have failed to identify some shortfalls in the care provided to children. She is working hard to improve monitoring systems, including the oversight and evaluation of children's records.

Despite the changes in management arrangements, staff have received regular supervision and their appraisals are up to date. In addition, staff have completed mandatory training and training that is specific to children's needs.

There are plans for this home to close and for the child and the staff to move to a new home that is undergoing renovation. Changes in the manager and uncertainty about the timescales for the move have contributed to low staff morale and staff feeling in 'limbo'. Despite this, the staff speak positively about the current manager and report feeling supported.

The manager has failed to appropriately report significant events to Ofsted. In addition, Ofsted has not been provided with an updated statement of purpose to reflect changes to the management arrangements. Shortfalls in communication with the regulator reduce the external oversight of the operation of the home.

Ofsted has been told that there has been a change in the responsible individual. The provider intends to make an official notification.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(vi)(vii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children are ready for independence, and have access to mains heating and hot water.	1 December 2023
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff—	1 December 2023

help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (1) (c)(2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children are encouraged and enabled to share their opinions and feedback and that these are acted on.	
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— help each child to understand how to keep safe; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)) This specifically relates to ensuring that children are supported to understand risk, and any bullying is actively addressed.	1 December 2023
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's 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;	1 December 2023

ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; 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)(b)(c)(f)(g)(i)(h)) This specifically relates to the manager creating a positive culture in the home that is focused on children's progress. This also relates to ensuring that there is management oversight of all aspects of the operation of the home.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children contribute to their care plans.	1 December 2023
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. The registered person must—	1 December 2023

keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the statement of purpose is reviewed, updated and sent to Ofsted.	
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; are kept up to date; are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) This specifically relates to ensuring that children's paperwork is up to date, and all documents created are signed and dated.	1 December 2023
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay— If there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they notify Ofsted of any serious concerns relating to a child.	10 November 2023

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: SC402406

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Aspris, The Forge, 43 Church Street West, Woking, Surrey GU21 6HT

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Stacie Sharpe, Social Care Inspector

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