

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 who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager is suitably qualified and has applied for registration with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 19 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/10/2021	Full	Good
05/02/2020	Full	Good
11/07/2018	Full	Good
11/05/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The manager and staff have created a warm and welcoming home for children. The children are decorating their bedrooms and choosing new furniture and colour schemes. The children told the inspector that they enjoy spending time in the garden, where they have their own sheds in which one child likes to play with his bicycle and the other likes to fix broken items.

Children access education full time are making good progress. Staff understand the importance of education. When children face difficulties, staff support children to attend reintegration meetings to discuss alternative behaviours. Furthermore, children are supported to use the school's well-being service. This practice ensures that children meet their academic targets and feel supported in the learning environment.

Staff support children to take part in a variety of activities, including spending time at the local skate park with friends, going bowling and visiting the gym. Furthermore, one child has recently got a part-time job at a local farm and enjoys spending time with the animals. The staff in the home are passionate about seeing children develop their interests and make happy memories. Activities encourage children to have fun and build relationships.

Overall, children's health is suitably managed. When children have previously refused to attend appointments, such as optician appointments, staff have introduced incentives to encourage them to attend. The staff have created written health plans for children which detail their medication needs and any diagnoses. However, one child's health record is not up to date. The manager has yet to obtain a child's vaccination history despite this being an action in his health plan.

Staff support children to see family members. Staff facilitate arrangements flexibly and provide transport and activities. Staff also support children to make decisions about these arrangements. For example, one child has changed his routine plan to be able to maintain work commitments. This supports children to feel involved in their care planning.

Children moving into the home are well supported. They have the opportunity to visit the home and meet with the staff and the other children who live in the home. In addition, staff spend time with children to understand what support they would like when they leave the home. This practice helps to reduce any worries and promotes new relationships.

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

During the inspection, children said that they feel safe and staff demonstrated a good understanding of children's risks. Overall, the written risk assessments

demonstrate clear strategies to inform staff practice. However, the manager has failed to consider and respond to the changing risk for one child. For example, the manager has identified that staff should carry out weekly mobile phone checks for a child who is at risk when using his mobile phone. However, the manager has not updated the child's assessment to reflect that he is now refusing to hand his mobile phone to staff, which means that staff cannot carry out the checks. This lack of clarity could lead to inconsistencies with staff practice and does not reflect proactive risk management.

The use of physical intervention is rare. There has only been one incident when intervention has been used since last inspection. When intervention is required, staff have failed to record the intervention clearly. For example, the accident form and the physical intervention log provide conflicting information about the child's bruising which was sustained during the intervention. The manager's oversight of this record has not identified this shortfall in recording. While this has had no serious consequence, the ineffective review from the manager means that any action required or support for the child could be delayed.

Children do not go missing. Staff have built good relationships with children and support them to understand their risks and vulnerabilities. For example, staff have carried out a range of direct work to develop an awareness of risk and to understand the steps staff will take to keep them safe.

Professionals speak highly of the care provided. Social workers spoken to said that communication is excellent and that children benefit from 'dedicated role models'. One parent spoken to during the inspection said that the manager and staff go 'above and beyond'.

Staff carry out regular health and safety checks to ensure that the home is physically safe. The home's location risk assessment has been recently updated to consider local crime statistics and feedback from external agencies. This practice ensures that the risks are explored and considered.

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

Since the last inspection, there has been a change to the management of the home. A new manager has been appointed and has applied for registration with Ofsted. Staff told the inspector that this manager is approachable and supportive.

Staff receive regular supervision, which consider how staff are working with children and any improvements that can be made. When staff are subject to a period of probation, they receive increased reflective sessions to support their learning. Some staff are yet to receive an appraisal in line with the home's workforce development plan. The manager recognised this shortfall prior to the inspection and has a schedule in place to carry these out.

The manager understands the importance of a skilled workforce. All staff are up to

date with mandatory training. In addition, staff have received training to help them to understand the specific needs of the children. This supports continuous professional development.

The manager has not ensured that safe medication practice is consistent. For example, the inspector identified recording errors on medication sheets, and times where staff had not explored medication refusals with children in line with the home's policy. The manager carries out monthly medication audits; however, she has failed to identify these shortfalls. While this has not had any serious consequence so far, it has the potential to do so.

Staff rotas do not always record the details of the actual staff who have worked. For example, the rota indicates that one member of staff worked during the night, despite the home's statement of purpose stating that there should always be two staff members on duty. During the inspection, the responsible individual provided evidence that this was not the case. However, the current rota does not demonstrate sufficient staff and adequate planning.

If there are concerns about staff practice, the manager ensures that these are investigated and that learning is considered. However, the manager has failed to ensure that children are supported when making complaints about the care they receive outside of the home. For example, one child raised dissatisfaction about a teacher at the school, and the manager has not ensured that this has been investigated or that the child has had a response. This practice does not provide assurance that the manager is consistently acting on children's views and ensuring effective safeguarding.

Children's case files do not contain all required information. For example, education plans and care plans are not in place. The manager has escalated this with the children's placing authority; however, the information is still not available. This does not ensure that staff and children have all the information that informs care experiences.

Managers have failed to promptly notify Ofsted about complaints made about care provided in the home. This prevents Ofsted from having full oversight of children's care, as a quality assurance mechanism.

To improve management oversight, the responsible individual is changing the monitoring tools to ensure that these link with internal policies. The manager hopes that these changes will ensure that there is a prompt response to shortfalls in practice. The effectiveness of this new practice will be considered at the next inspection.

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
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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) This specifically relates to ensuring that risk assessments include all information about known risks to the child and set out clear guidance for staff about how to manage and reduce these risks.	12 December 2022
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— 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(g)(ii)) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that she considers all feedback from children.	12 December 2022

The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that medication is administered as prescribed. In addition, when children refuse medication, this should be responded to by staff in line with the home's medication policy.	12 December 2022
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(vii)(viii)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that records of physical interventions are clear and that recording of any injuries is clear and consistent.	12 December 2022
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. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that children's up-to-date care plans and education plans are in place.	12 December 2022
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.	12 December 2022

The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the home has an up-to-date rota that reflects the staff who have worked in the home.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay— there is allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they notify Ofsted of complaints or concerns about any staff working in the home.	12 December 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that each child's day-to-day health and well-being needs are met. This includes ensuring that the staff have up-to-date records of children's immunisations and that any omissions are actioned. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role appraised at least once annually. This should consider, where reasonable, the views of other and children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: The Forge, Church Street West, Woking, Surrey
GU21 6HT

Responsible individual: Dwane Eacock

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspector

Sophie Hills, Social Care Inspector

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