

SC402426

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to five children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The post of registered manager has been vacant since December 2023.

Two children were living at the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection date: 9 January 2024

Date of last inspection: 24 October 2023

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Following the last inspection, one child has moved from the home to a home better suited to their needs. The children at this home make variable progress. For example, one child continues to attend mainstream school and goes to dance and trampolining classes. However, despite some support from staff, the other child is making limited progress with their education.

Staff continue to maintain positive relationships with children's family members and endeavour to keep them updated about their child's care. Children are supported by staff to spend quality time with their families.

There has been some improvement in the children's in-house placement plans and the children now have personal escape and evacuation plans in place. However, this continues to be an area for development. Furthermore, staff still do not ensure that children's care records are always kept up to date and contain relevant information.

Children are safe. There have been no safeguarding incidents and no occasions when physical restraint has been necessary. There have been no incidents of children going missing from the home. The children and the staff say the home feels calmer.

There is clear guidance to help staff understand how to help reduce the risk of self-injurious behaviour by a child. Despite there being an increase in such episodes, staff have responded appropriately and have given appropriate support, including offering access to mental health services. However, not all staff have received training to raise their awareness about self-harm.

Staff have not ensured that medication is administered safely to children. On instruction from a child's social worker, staff bought and administered medication that is not suitable for children. This was identified by a supporting manager and is being addressed appropriately.

Since the last inspection, one child's bedroom has been decorated to reflect their individual taste. However, the rest of the home still requires decoration and repair throughout. For example, there are spindles missing from the staircase and carpets are worn. On one landing, the ripped carpet is taped down.

The registered manager voluntarily cancelled her registration in December 2023. She had not been in day-to-day charge of the home since August 2023. The operation of the home is being overseen by the responsible individual and an interim manager from another home.

The management team has been working hard to upskill the staff team. However, some staff have not yet completed all the required training. There have been improvements in the professional supervision of staff but some gaps remain. In addition, staff have not had their performance appraised and, consequently, do not have professional development plans.

The interim manager was unable to demonstrate that she had assured herself that a new member of staff had been safely recruited.

Despite changes to the staff team, managers have not provided Ofsted with an updated statement of purpose since July 2023. This means that the regulator has not received up-to-date information about the operation of the home.

The management team acknowledges the shortfalls that remain from the last inspection and the two additional requirements raised at this assurance inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/10/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/03/2023	Full	Good
26/07/2021	Full	Good
25/02/2020	Full	Good

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(iv)(v)(x)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff support children to overcome barriers to their education and that staff engage children in learning when they are not in education or are refusing education.	29 February 2024
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;	29 February 2024

have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(d)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff have the skills to meet children's complex needs, to help reduce risk, and that children are supported to understand risk. In addition, managers must ensure that the home environment is safe and risk-free.	
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; 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; 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)(c)(f)(h)) This specifically relates to ensuring that the staff have the skills to provide the required care to children and that managers have systems in place to monitor and develop children's care effectively.	29 February 2024

The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1)) This specifically relates to ensuring that children are administered non prescribed appropriately.	29 February 2024
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff have appropriate training to meet the needs of children and that staff have regular professional supervision.	29 February 2024
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; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that staff keep children's records up to date.	29 February 2024
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— 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) (2)(a)(b))	31 January 2024
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.	31 January 2024

The registered person may permit an individual to start work at the home despite the fact that the requirement in paragraph (3)(d) has not been met if—

the registered person has taken all reasonable steps to obtain full information about each of the matters in Schedule 2 in respect of the individual, but the enquiries in relation to any of the matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2 are incomplete;

full and satisfactory information in respect of the individual has been obtained in relation to the matters in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (7)(a)(b))

This specifically relates to ensuring that the manager assures themselves that safe recruitment processes have been followed and staff files are available.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC402426

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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