

SC453726

Registered provider: Aston Children's Care Ltd

Full 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 four children with complex behaviours due to childhood trauma.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2022 and holds a level 5 qualification in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

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: 18 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/07/2023	Full	Good
30/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/11/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/09/2021	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of inspection, three children were living at the home, and they are all making good progress from their starting points. For example, one child can now manage their personal care needs better. This child's social worker said, 'The support provided to [name of child] is phenomenal.' Another child has lived in the home for over two years, and their social worker said, '[Name of child] is making good progress. They have been the most settled since living at this home.' Children say they like living in the home and speak positively about the staff who care for them.

Children benefit from a therapeutic approach to care that is delivered by staff with the support of the organisation's therapist. Staff understand children's individual needs well and provide them with a good standard of care. This has helped children to build some trusting relationships with the adults who care for them.

Children receive good support to understand their identity, ethnicity and faith. Staff advocate for and encourage children to explore their identity. This helps to ensure that children feel valued and supported and are enabled to learn more about themselves.

The progress children make with their education is mixed. However, staff do all they can to encourage children to attend school regularly and to understand and overcome any barriers to this. One child is engaging in online learning until suitable school provision is found.

Aspects of care planning for children require improvement. For example, the manager does not always obtain all the information available to help them to understand and consider whether new children are likely to be able to live well alongside children already living at the home. At times, some children's behaviours have negatively affected other children.

Some areas of the home environment require attention and redecoration. For example, one child's bedroom is cluttered and contains some broken furniture. In addition, the garden is not well maintained to be a nice space for children to enjoy when the weather is good. The manager took swift action to address these issues during the inspection.

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

Staff manage incidents well when children go missing from home. They follow procedures and act quickly to support children to return home safely. The manager and staff are working proactively with other professionals and the child to understand why children go missing from home and to try to reduce such incidents from reoccurring. The manager has made good links with the local policing team and a specialist organisation and works well with these professionals to review, manage and reduce risks to children.

Staff have a good understanding of the risks and vulnerabilities that children face. Children are supported well by staff to understand risk, and they have learned how to keep themselves safe when they spend time in the community. When children self-harm, staff provide them with reassurance and support. Over time, children are learning to manage their emotions without hurting themselves.

Children know how to make a complaint. When they do, their concerns are taken seriously, so children feel valued and heard.

Sometimes children need to be restrained to keep them and others safe. When such incidents happen, managers do not review records promptly and thoroughly. This is a missed opportunity to learn from and improve practice.

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

The manager and deputy manager undertake monthly supervision and team meetings with staff. These are focused on enhancing staff development and their understanding of children's needs. New staff have undertaken suitable training to equip them with the skills and knowledge they need to support children.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that an independent person visits the home at least once a month and compiles a report that is shared with Ofsted in a timely way. As a result, a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children has been delayed.

When serious incidents happen, managers do not always ensure that these are reported to Ofsted in a timely way. In addition, the information provided about what has happened and the actions taken is not always clear.

The registered manager has not recently carried out a quality of care review. This shortfall impacts on the manager's ability to reflect and use learning to improve children's experiences and the quality of care they receive. In addition, children's records are not kept up to date consistently, nor are they stored securely.

The registered provider has appointed new directors. Ofsted had not been notified of these changes.

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 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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(h))	31 August 2024
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that before a child moves into the home, they have all the relevant information to inform their planning and the preparation of children already living in the home.	31 August 2024
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child —	31 August 2024

is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)) This is specifically in relation to the registered manager ensuring notifications of serious events are submitted to Ofsted without delay and that details of clear actions in relation to matters and actions taken are included.	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (1) (4)(a)(b))	31 August 2024
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children.	31 August 2024

the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.

After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report")

The registered person must—

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))

In particular, the registered person must produce a report that evaluates the quality of care provided by the home within the required timescale.

The registered person must give notice in writing to HMCI, as soon as it reasonably practicable to do so, if any of the following events takes place or are expected by the registered person to take place—

if the registered provider is an organisation—

any change of director, manager, secretary or other similar officer of the organisation. (Regulation 49 (e)(ii))

The registered person must inform Ofsted about the change in directors at the organisation.

31 August 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when children's records are stored electronically, information can be easily accessed by anyone with legitimate need to view them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2)
- The registered person should ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is supportive and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. In particular, ensure that children are supported by staff to keep their bedrooms tidy and that staff maintain other areas of the home to a good standard. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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: SC453726

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Aston Children's Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 147 Stamford Hill, London, NG16 5LG

Responsible individual: Dimple Ghera

Registered manager: Sarah Phipps

Inspector

Joanne Humphreys, Social Care Inspector

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