

SC453726

Aston Children's Care Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to four children, aged between eight and 18 years, with complex behaviours due to childhood trauma.

The registered manager's post is vacant.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection date: 6 October 2021

This monitoring visit

This children's home was judged inadequate at the full inspection on 7 September 2021. As a result of the inspection, five compliance notices were raised. A notice restricting the number of children who can live in the home was also issued.

This monitoring visit reviewed the action taken by managers to meet the shortfalls raised in three of the five compliance notices, for regulation 11, regulation 13 and regulation 32. The other two compliance notices issued had a longer timeframe in which to comply and therefore were not reviewed during this monitoring visit.

Since the full inspection, one child has moved out of the home. Three children now live in the home. They have all lived there for around a year.

The registered manager has left her post. In the absence of a manager, the operations manager is overseeing the care of children and management of staff. Recruitment of a new manager has been successful and her start date is imminent.

Managers have stopped using agency workers to care for children. Gaps in the rota have been filled by permanent members of staff from the provider's other homes. This now provides children with a more consistent care team.

Leaders and managers have not taken enough action to ensure the safe recruitment of staff. For example, gaps in employment were not fully explored for two members of staff who are currently working in the home. Furthermore, managers failed to explore potential risk factors and there are omissions in a reference verification. This means staff working in the home have not been safely recruited.

Children told the inspectors their relationships with staff have improved. Some staff who previously worked in the home are no longer there. Inspectors observed staff and children to be respectful when talking to each other. This is an improving picture which has a positive impact on children's experiences.

Staff talk to children to help them better understand positive relationships, including talking about bullying. Children said they now have rules in place and bullying has stopped. Staff support children's positive behaviour with reward systems. This is having a positive impact on children's behaviour and their relationships with each other and the staff team. Consequently, children have consistency from staff and the children are now more settled.

As a result of this visit, compliance notices for regulation 11 and 13 have been met. However, Ofsted has reissued a compliance notice under regulation 32 regarding the safe recruitment of staff. A further monitoring visit will take place to review the outstanding compliance notices.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/09/2021	Full	Inadequate
15/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/01/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/06/2018	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, 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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(c)) This specifically relates to escalating concerns when children's educational needs are not met.	17 October 2021
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff provide children with appropriate support and guidance to help them to stop smoking cigarettes.	17 October 2021
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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(ii))	17 October 2021

This specifically relates to ensuring that staff effectively address the risk associated with children smoking in the home.	
*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— manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff take action and support children so they no longer harm one another. Also, to ensuring that staff keep each child safe from harm.	17 October 2021
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 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)(d)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff provide children with a safe environment to live in. Also, to staff ensuring that the home is well maintained.	3 October 2021
*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.	17 October 2021

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(d)(h)) This specifically relates to ensuring that the staff have sufficient training required to meet the needs of children and have their level 3 qualification. It also relates to ensuring that the manager has effective monitoring and review systems. In addition, this relates to ensuring there are enough appropriately recruited staff on shift.	
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 children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)) This specifically relates to ensuring that the provider only admits children into the home when they fully understand their needs and can confidently meet those needs.	17 October 2021

It also relates to ensuring that staff follow all children's relevant plans, including behaviour support plans, risk assessments and deprivation of liberty orders.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff are safely recruited as required.	17 October 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	17 October 2021
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; 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. 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) (5))	17 October 2021

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC453726

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Aston Children's Care Limited

Registered provider address: 181 Penn Road, Wolverhampton WV3 0EQ

Responsible individual: Mahesh Mehan

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Jodie Lewis, Social Care Inspector

Louise Battersby, Social Care Inspector

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