

SC453726

Registered provider: Aston Children's Care Ltd

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: 18 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.

A monitoring visit was carried out on 6 October 2021, to review three of the five compliance notices raised. Inspectors found that managers had made some improvements to the care children received and had met the compliance notices issued under regulation 11 and regulation 13. However, shortfalls remained in the safe recruitment of staff and therefore the compliance notice issued under regulation 32 had not been met and was reissued.

This monitoring visit took place on 18 October 2021, to review the outstanding compliance notices issued under regulation 12, regulation 13 and regulation 32.

Inspectors found that no action had been taken to address regulatory shortfalls with regard to safe recruitment. Managers had failed to take action on the shortfalls previously identified by inspectors. Furthermore, the recruitment file for the newly appointed manager who was working in the home did not meet regulatory requirements. This demonstrates that managers continue to fail in the safe

recruitment of staff. This means children continue to be cared for by staff who have not been subject to safer recruitment practices and places children at risk of harm.

Managers told inspectors staff had now received the training they require to support children's individual needs. However, they were unable to provide evidence of this. Training records do not contain the most up-to-date information. In addition, managers are unsure how many staff have completed their level 3 qualification or equivalent. Monitoring systems are not effective, as they fail to identify and trigger a response to these shortfalls. These failures do not demonstrate staff have the appropriate skills and training to meet the individual needs of children.

The responsible individual has failed to have sufficient oversight of the management of the home to ensure regulatory compliance. They consistently fail to take sufficient action to meet compliance notices.

Staff are now taking prompt action to intervene when children are being unkind to each other. They are working with children to help them further understand bullying and positive relationships. As a result of this more positive action, incidents of bullying between children have decreased. The compliance notice for regulation 12 is therefore met.

Ofsted has issued further compliance notices, under regulation 13, regulation 26 and regulation 32. A further inspection will take place to review the action taken to meet the compliance notices and regulatory requirements that have been raised.

The notice restricting the number of children who can live in the home remains in place.

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 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—	14 November 2021

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 to meet the needs of children and have their level 3 qualification. It also relates to ensuring that the manager uses effective monitoring and review systems.	
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. It also relates to ensuring that staff follow all children’s relevant plans, including behaviour support plans, risk assessments and deprivation of liberty orders.	17 October 2021
*A responsible individual must—	14 November 2021

have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated (Regulation 26 (7)(b)) This specifically relates to the registered individual having oversight of the management of the home, the staff and the care afforded to children. In addition, to ensure that regulatory compliance is met within the given time frame.	
A person may only manage a children's home if— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the person in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 28 (1)(c)) This specifically relates to managers being subject to the appropriate checks to ensure they are considered safe to work with children.	14 November 2021
*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 agency staff are safely recruited as required.	14 November 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;	17 October 2021

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))	
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*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 Ltd

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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