

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 and accommodation for up to four children and young people, aged between eight and 18 years, with complex behaviours due to childhood trauma.

The home has been without a registered manager since April 2019. A new manager has been appointed but has not yet registered with Ofsted.

On 18 August 2020, a monitoring visit was undertaken, following concerns raised about poor placement matching. No compliance action was taken following this monitoring visit.

On 28 to 29 October 2020, an assurance visit took place. We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

Inspection date: 19 January 2021

This monitoring visit

This monitoring visit took place due to concerns about the leadership and management of the home, following a review of notifications sent to Ofsted by the provider.

The home has been without a registered manager since April 2019. Since this time, there has been a high turnover of managers. On 11 January 2021, a new manager, who does not have previous experience of managing a children's home, was appointed. She has not yet applied to register with Ofsted. The manager's brief time in post and lack of previous management experience mean that Ofsted is not yet assured of her ability to manage the home effectively.

The inconsistent management arrangements have contributed to poor oversight of the care provided to children. As a result, some of the requirements raised at the

last assurance visit have not been met. These include keeping the statement of purpose up to date and completing a quality of care review. This does not demonstrate effective leadership.

As a result of the six-monthly quality of care review not being completed, there have been missed opportunities to analyse and evaluate the care provided to children. Consequently, managers have not been able to identify and address shortfalls in staff practice. This has contributed to children experiencing a variable quality of care.

Although staff have undertaken mandatory training, they have not completed training to support them to meet the individual needs of those children currently living in the home, including needs around managing anxiety and depression, hyperkinetic conduct disorder and global developmental delay. Managers have not fully assessed staff's ability to meet these needs.

Managers' planning prior to children moving into the home is limited. Managers fail to consider all known risks for children admitted to the home. This has the potential to place both new and existing children living at the home at unnecessary risk of harm.

Furthermore, staff have mixed success in helping children to feel comfortable and happy. This is because staff do not always have the skills to meet individual children's needs. One child has stated that they do not want to live in the home. Inspectors observed that this child has not been supported to unpack their belongings, despite living there for some time. This is likely to have impacted upon their sense of belonging and attachment to the home and staff.

Children do not have trusting relationships with staff. They do not feel that staff follow through on plans that are made for them. For example, one child said that staff had promised them some phone credit, but this was not given. The lack of explanation for this left the child feeling frustrated and upset. Staff are not successful in helping children to understand why such decisions are made. As a result, children do not feel valued, and this results in them not wanting to live in the home.

During the inspection, one child's bedroom was in an untidy state. The manager's rationale for this was that staff were airing the child's bedroom. The inspectors were not assured by this explanation.

Children's placement plans do not contain up-to-date information relating to their specific care needs. For example, the plans do not provide suitable information in relation to children's health and behavioural needs. This means staff are not given guidance on how best to care for children. This impacts on the quality of care provided to children.

Similarly, risk assessments and behaviour management plans are of inferior quality. They are not accurate or up to date. For example, it is unclear what staffing levels are needed to supervise children safely or how this decision has been made. This inadequate approach to safeguarding and behaviour management has the potential to increase the likelihood of harm for children and staff.

Significant incidents, such as children going missing or needing to be physically restrained, are low in number. Despite this, when such incidents occur, staff do not record enough detail about what happened. Furthermore, managers' review of such incidents is limited. This means that leaders and managers are unable to identify and respond to shortfalls in staff practice in a timely manner. Consequently, this impacts on the outcomes for children and compromises their safety and well-being.

Currently, children and staff do not have adequate internet access. This means that staff use their personal mobile phones to use the internet. This is a barrier to staff being able to review and update records in a timely and effective way. Furthermore, the poor internet access makes children's access to online education difficult and impedes children's contact with their family members.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/01/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/06/2018	Full	Good
12/09/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be 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
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))	26 February 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— 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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;	26 February 2021

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)(d)(f)(h))	
*The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))	26 February 2021
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure. (Regulation 35 (2) (3)(a)(ii)(vii)(b)(i))	26 February 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	26 February 2021

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. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a))	
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. Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. Nothing in paragraph (5) or regulation 46 (review of premises) requires or authorises the registered person to contravene or not comply with— any other provision of these Regulations; or any conditions in relation to the registration of the registered person under Part 2 of the Care Standards Act 2000. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b) (5) (6)(a)(b))	26 February 2021

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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

Lisa O'Donovan, social care inspector
Sam Dulay-Kainth, social care inspector

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