

1211772

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private company. It provides care for up to six children with social and emotional difficulties.

There has been no registered manager at the home since August 2023. There is an interim manager in post who has made their application to register with Ofsted.

There were three children living at the home at the time of this inspection. The inspector spoke to two of the children and observed all three children during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 January 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 5 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/07/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/03/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/12/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/10/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Staff do not always use a therapeutic parenting approach as outlined in the statement of purpose. This means that children receive inconsistent responses. Staff do not always understand the reason for a child's behaviour and how to respond to prevent further incidents. Additionally, the manager and staff do not analyse what could have caused the child's response and help the child to understand the impact of their behaviours on others. Staff have unrealistic expectations of children, for example what a child needs to do to have their damaged furniture replaced.

Staff do not always adopt a nurturing approach to help children recover from their past traumas. On some occasions, the language used by staff is negative. This does not help children to develop a positive view of themselves.

Staff do not always support children to develop their skills and gain strategies to manage their own conflicts. Staff respond in a reactive way in response to an incident instead of helping children to understand their emotions or to educate them about the risks that they face.

Staff lock cupboards so the children cannot have access to food, such as snacks. These measures limit opportunities for staff to educate children to make informed decisions about healthier food choices. Furthermore, the children have bedroom door alarms to monitor when they enter or leave their bedroom during the evening. The manager does not regularly review whether this level of monitoring is necessary for each child. This means that some of the children may be unnecessarily monitored.

The home is large and comfortable. Children have ample space to spend time together or with staff. Children's bedrooms are categorised by a number on their bedroom doors. This creates an institutionalised feel and detracts from an otherwise homely environment.

Staff support children to attend or engage in important meetings, such as their statutory reviews. Some children contribute by completing their own update before the meeting. This helps children to have a voice and shape decisions that may be made about them.

Most children attend school consistently. Staff understand the importance of children attending school or college and how this can impact on children's future life choices and aspirations.

Children's move into the home is well planned. Children can visit, meet staff and meet the other children. The manager and staff communicate with professionals to learn more about the child. Staff use this to adapt the children's guide so that it is

unique to the child. This helps children to feel welcomed into the home and helps to reduce the anxiety a move can bring.

Children speak positively about the home, their rooms and the staff who care for them. One child has voiced their opinion about returning to foster care. This was taken seriously by the manager, who advocated on their behalf by informing the child's social worker.

Children enjoy a range of activities for their enjoyment and learning. Memory books contain photos and memorabilia of special events. Staff record positive affirmations daily in children's books. This helps to show children that staff are invested in them and that their experiences are valued.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Some children have moved out of the home when their risks and vulnerabilities increased. This is because staff were unable to manage the increasing risks to keep the children safe.

Behaviour management responses by staff are inconsistent, and children do not always receive predictable care. One child was given a consequence that was a reactive response by a staff member and not part of the child's behaviour support plan. Additionally, some children receive the same consequence repeatedly. The manager does not review these measures to consider their effectiveness and to look at alternative strategies for staff to use.

Children do not always receive a well-coordinated response when they are missing from the home. Staff are not always proactive in helping the children return home, and the staff's response to one child was not helpful in encouraging the child to return. Children are not consistently offered a chance to speak to someone when they return home. This is a missed opportunity for the child to receive help and support. Additionally, this limits opportunities for the child to share information about why they went missing to prevent further incidents.

When staff physically hold children to keep them and others safe, staff are not properly recording these incidents. The records of the physical interventions do not detail the strategies staff use to de-escalate the situation. This means that the manager and staff cannot assess the effectiveness of staff's responses and whether they should try new strategies.

When children's risks increase, staff carry out 'ad-hoc' bedroom searches. Staff do not provide enough detail in their recording to outline why the search was necessary and why certain items are deemed to be a concern for the child. Records of the bedroom searches do not always show whether the child was informed of the search or whether staff sought their views.

Children have thorough risk assessments that identify strategies for staff to follow to help them. Children say that they feel safe living at the home, and they can identify a trusted staff member to speak to. Safer recruitment procedures are followed, which helps to ensure that the adults supporting children are safe.

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

There has been instability in the management arrangements since the last inspection. The management changes have hindered the continuity of oversight of the home. For example, some documents, such as audits, could not be located.

The manager considers a child's needs and vulnerabilities before they move into the home. However, there is no consideration about the needs of the new child and those already living in the home, for example the impact on one child of no longer being the youngest child. At times, this impacts on the relationship between the children.

Children's records and risk assessments do not always show the date and author of the changes made. This limits oversight by the manager and the accountability of staff. Important documents include a 'read and understood' sheet for staff to sign. Staff do not always follow this procedure. This means that staff may not always use the most up-to-date information about the children's needs.

The manager does not have effective monitoring systems to review children's records. This has resulted in poor practice continuing in respect of the staff's recording of incidents, such as physical holds and consequences. Furthermore, staff do not always receive reflective supervision. This limits opportunities for staff to improve their practice and the care that children receive.

The senior leadership team responds to safeguarding concerns about staff conduct. Their actions and investigations ensure the safety of children.

The manager acknowledges the shortfalls found and has identified some strategies and tools that will assist her to have oversight of the home. The manager and staff work collaboratively with professionals who, together with family members, provide positive comments about how the staff care for children at the home.

What does the children’s home need to do to improve? Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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))</p>	<p>8 April 2024</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>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—</p> <p>details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure.</p>	<p>8 April 2024</p>

<p>(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(viii))</p>	
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose;</p> <p>protect and promote each child’s welfare;</p> <p>treat each child with dignity and respect;</p> <p>help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect;</p> <p>help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult;</p> <p>provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; and</p> <p>make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice;</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child; and</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(ix)(c)(i)(ii))</p>	<p>8 April 2024</p>

<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p>	<p>8 April 2024</p>
--	---------------------

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when it is necessary to search a child's bedroom without their permission, there is a clear rationale for doing so and it is clear when the child was informed. The registered person should provide a reason for removing any items. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should ensure that behaviour management strategies are understood and applied at all times by staff and must be kept under review and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: 1211772

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: Lauren Gilbey

Registered manager: vacant post

Inspector

Cat Makel, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024