

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	05/10/2016
Unique reference number	SC434223
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Aspirations Specialist Residential Children's services Ltd
Registered provider address	Unit B2, Elmbridge Court, Cheltenham Road East, Gloucester GL3 1JZ

Responsible individual	Christine Cameron
Registered manager	Nicola Freeman
Inspector	Sandra King

Inspection date	05/10/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Declined effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
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.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC434223

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision requires improvement because:

- Managers and staff do not challenge partnership agencies to ensure that young people receive the services they need to make good enough progress.
- Risk assessments are not personalised and do not contain important information regarding issues such as child sexual exploitation. They do not give staff enough information for them to provide good quality care to young people.
- Recording of safeguarding incidents is poor. This means that there is a lack of learning in order to try to prevent future safeguarding incidents from happening.
- Staff do not consult with young people in respect of the quality of care that they receive.
- Management oversight is weak. Senior management guidance is not always followed.
- The statement of purpose is not up to date and staff are not meeting its aims and objectives.
- Young people's case files do not contain important information that is essential to their everyday care planning.

The children's home's strengths

- Relationships between young people are good.
- Some young people have lived at the home for a number of years.
- Education attendance has improved.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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
<p>5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met.</p> <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>(c) 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.</p>	24/12/2016
<p>6: The quality and purpose of care standard.</p> <p>(1) The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>(a) understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>(b) use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>(b) ensure that staff—</p> <p>(iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background;</p> <p>(vi) 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>7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard.</p> <p>(1) The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>(2)(iv) regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care.</p>	24/12/2016
<p>10: The health and well-being standard.</p>	24/12/2016

<p>(1) The health and well-being standard is that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the health and well-being needs of children are met (b) children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being, and (c) children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) that staff help each child to— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans. 	
<p>12: The protection of children standard.</p> <p>(1) The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) that staff— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) 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; (d) 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. 	24/12/2016
<p>13: The leadership and management standard.</p> <p>(1) 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare. <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) 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; (f) 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; (g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (ii) feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints 	24/12/2016

<p>received;</p> <p>(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	
<p>14: The care planning standard.</p> <p>(1) The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>(a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure;</p> <p>(f) that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child.</p>	24/12/2016
<p>16: Statement of purpose.</p> <p>(1) 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.</p>	24/12/2016
<p>32: Fitness of workers.</p> <p>(4) For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>(a) the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (‘the Level 3 Diploma’).</p>	06/04/2017
<p>36: Children’s case records.</p> <p>(1) The registered person must maintain records (‘case records’) for each child which—</p> <p>(a) include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>(b) are kept up to date; and</p> <p>(c) are signed and dated by the author of each entry.</p>	24/12/2016

Full report

Information about this children's home

This service is a privately owned children's home registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people of either gender with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. Placements are made on a medium- or long-term basis. Education can be provided on site at the service's registered school.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/02/2016	Interim	Declined effectiveness
04/08/2015	Full	Good
11/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/10/2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
<p>The quality and effectiveness of the care provided to young people is not consistently good enough. One-to-one sessions are weak and lack purpose. For example, some sessions consist of young people and staff watching a DVD together. Sessions are not meaningful and lack reflection. Staff have failed to undertake one-to-one sessions that have been prearranged and agreed with the placing authority. This does not provide young people with the opportunity to learn new ways of managing their emotions. The provider is not meeting the aims and objectives of young people’s placements. Staff do not always involve young people in decisions about their care. They do not seek their views and opinions regarding the quality of the care they receive. As a result, young people do not always fully invest in their placement.</p> <p>Young people generally have positive relationships with staff and say that they are happy in the home. One young person said, ‘The home has improved since the last inspection.’ However, some staff have shared personal information and unhelpful views about other staff members with young people. This has had a negative impact on young people’s relationships with some staff members, particularly in their ability to sustain trusting relationships. Consequently, some staff had to be moved to other homes. Young people have been exposed to staff dynamics that they should not have been, potentially affecting their self-esteem and attachments.</p> <p>Young people are involved in choosing aspects of the home’s interior and personalising their own bedrooms. The home is clean and tidy with a warm, welcoming feel. However, a radiator in the bathroom has suffered significant damage, and has rust falling off it. This leaves young people living in a home that is not fully meeting their needs.</p> <p>Young people are making some progress educationally. Staff engage with and support young people in educational and training opportunities. Young people’s attendance at school has improved. However, due to the close proximity of the home and the school, boundaries are blurred. For example, young people return to the home hourly during the school day. This does not allow young people to separate their home life from their education. As a result, young people’s educational needs are not being maximised to help them to reach their full potential.</p> <p>Young people generally enjoy good health. They are registered with all appropriate medical professionals and attend routine appointments. They engage in regular physical activity and enjoy a healthy diet. This ensures that their physical health</p>	

needs are met. However, there are significant delays in young people accessing some services that they need, such as emotional health support services. Staff do not challenge other agencies in respect of this. As a result, there are missed opportunities for young people to receive psychological support in a timely manner. This has had a negative impact on their behaviour, self-esteem and confidence.

Young people enjoy a range of activities and have enjoyed fun experiences. They are encouraged to choose the activities that they would like to do. For example, playing football, going to Boing Zone Trampoline Park, the cinema and shopping. Some young people also enjoy going on holiday with their friends. This improves their self-esteem.

Independence work with young people is inconsistent. Young people do not always want to engage in independence work. Staff do not consider alternative and creative ways to engage young people in essential activities that will aid them in their future lives as an adult. As a result, young people will not be fully prepared to make the transition into semi-independence and adulthood.

Young people's transitions into the home are positive. They visit the home prior to moving in. However, leaders and managers have failed to make sure that they have enough information about young people's histories and experiences prior to moving in. This has negatively compromised young people's care due to staff not having enough information about their needs.

Staff support some young people to have contact with their families. Other young people do not receive the level of support they need. For example, contact has not taken place when young people or staff have not known the whereabouts of family members. Staff have not been proactive to try to find out their new address. As a result, some young people feel isolated from their families.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
<p>Risk assessments do not contain enough information about young people's specific needs. They are generic and do not identify how young people's needs can best be met. For example, staff do not document any risks associated with child sexual exploitation or strategies to minimise these risks. Not all staff have received training in child sexual exploitation, nor is there any future training arranged. As a result, young people may be at further risk, and their safety is not promoted.</p> <p>Young people rarely go missing from the home. However, on the one occasion that this happened, staff did not fully follow risk-management plans and missing protocols. They did not comprehensively document what happened in order to</p>	

learn from it and prevent future such occurrences. They did not make sure that the young person had the opportunity to speak to someone independent of the home about the reasons he went missing. This means that significant safeguarding information is missing.

There has been no recorded use of physical intervention since the previous inspection. Sanctions within the home are not always proportionate and reasonable. Staff do not always look at alternative options or restorative justice. As a result, young people do not learn about acceptable ways to behave.

The understanding by staff of safety in the home and the surrounding environment is lacking in identifying risks and hazards. Although fire drills take place monthly, some young people do not engage in them due to their frequency. The home's location risk assessment does not fully address risk in the local area, such as child sexual exploitation, farm machinery or lack of street lighting. This means that young people's safety and welfare are not consistently promoted.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
<p>An appropriately qualified and experienced registered manager is in post. She is currently enrolled on the level 5 diploma in leadership and management in residential childcare. Since the last inspection, staffing issues have been resolved and there is now a stable staff team providing young people with consistency. One experienced member of staff who has worked for a number of years in residential care has not yet completed the required level 3 diploma. All other staff are within regulatory timescales for achieving their qualifications.</p> <p>Staff receive supervision and feel supported in their role. However, the registered manager has not always followed senior manager's advice in addressing areas of concern. This means that the registered manager does not make sure that staff adhere to professional codes of conduct. Consequently, they are not delivering the aims and objectives of the statement of purpose.</p> <p>Management oversight lacks rigour. Young people's case files do not contain important information, such as care plans. Staff are not always providing care that meets the aims and objectives as outlined within young people's care plans. For example, the registered manager has not sought support for young people when they need it, in relation to their emotional well-being. She has failed to challenge other agencies so that the young people can access the service.</p> <p>Recording is poor on some documents. There are discrepancies between risk assessments and case records. This has a negative impact on the monitoring of the</p>	

care being provided to young people.

The statement of purpose for the home does not contain sufficient detail. For example, staffing information does not mention experience and qualifications and the provider's address is incorrect. In addition, the version published on the home's website is significantly out of date. This does not ensure that accurate information is available to young people, their families or other professionals. This limits their awareness of the support they should expect.

The registered manager does not fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and is not always able to identify or address shortfalls. She does not have a full understanding of the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of young people. Due to poor documentation, there is a lack of learning from incidents. Consequently, the development of the home is poorly informed.

The requirements from the previous inspection have been met. However, the recommendations have not been met.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for children looked after 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 4234, 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 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/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016