

# SC471725

Registered provider: Aspirations Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a national provider of services for children and adults. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 3 July 2017

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account**                      **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected                      good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers                      requires improvement to be good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 25 January 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** declined in effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection**

None.

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Relationships between the staff and young people are extremely positive. Consequently, the current young person is happy and is making good progress. A previous resident has written to thank the staff for all that they have done for her.
- The young person is working well with the education staff and has met his learning targets.
- The staff offer a wide range of home and community-based activities. The young person goes out into the community with increasing confidence.
- The young person is very fit and healthy. He plays rugby regularly and understands the importance of healthy eating.
- Young people who left the home recently did so in a planned way. The staff supported them well. In spite of problems accessing education, social work professionals are positive about the progress that their young people make.
- The staff promote good quality contact between the young people and their families.
- The home has an experienced and qualified registered manager. He has kept young people at the centre of the home's practice and has advocated for them when necessary.
- The manager leads a child-centred, nurturing home where staff work as a mutually supportive team to meet the young person's needs.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Fire safety tests have not always taken place at recommended intervals. The manager had not identified this shortfall.
- The home has used electronic surveillance. This is not explained in the statement of purpose. The document also makes reference to another children's home.
- None of the staff have achieved their qualifications at level 3. This means that the young people do not receive care from qualified staff.
- The staff do not receive regular supervision in line with the company's policy.

- There is damp on the ceiling in the downstairs toilet. The lock on the toilet door broke several months ago and is still waiting for repair.
- Records are not kept safely. Because of this, some important documents have fallen apart.
- Incident reports are not always dated. The manager does not always challenge shortfalls in recording with the staff concerned.

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
25/01/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
31/05/2016	Full	Good
01/12/2015	Full	Requires improvement
19/08/2015	Full	Inadequate

## 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
<p>The leadership and management standard</p> <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 helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>This is with particular reference to monitoring the home to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fire alarm checks are completed at recommended intervals</li> <li>• the young people's records are dated correctly</li> <li>• the home's records are archived safely to avoid damage</li> <li>• staff supervision is carried out regularly and recorded.</li> </ul> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(2)(h))</p>	31/08/2017
<p>Statement of purpose</p> <p>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> <p>This is with particular reference to the need to record details of any electronic surveillance provision in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 16 (1) and Schedule 1).</p>	31/08/2017
<p>Fitness of workers</p> <p>The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home, if the individual has the appropriate</p>	31/08/2017

experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. 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 the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is (a) in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or (b) in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.

(Regulation 32 (2)(3)(b)(4) and (5)).

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the last full inspection on 31 May 2016, the home was looking after one young person. He was happy, settled and had made good progress in all areas of his life. In June 2016, a second young person came to live in the home. The two young people had difficulties with each other.

Neither of the young people felt happy in the home. This contributed to an increase in challenging behaviour, incidents and restraints. The other young person harmed herself to the point where she lost consciousness. The staff did not ask for medical attention when necessary. At the interim inspection on 25 January 2017, the home had declined in effectiveness.

Relationships between the two young people did improve after the interim inspection. This allowed them to stay together for a further five months. Social work professionals are positive about their young people's progress.

The local authority in which the home is situated did not identify a school place for one of the young people. This was because she came from outside the county. The placing authority have now moved this young woman back into their own area. This will enable her to go to college. The registered manager understands the importance of education.

He says that he will now ensure that a school place is available before accepting young people from outside the county. This may limit the home's future capacity.

The staff helped this young woman to move out of the home in a sensitive manner. They helped to introduce the young person to their new placement in their home town. There have been no new admissions since the interim inspection.

The present inspection found sufficient improvement in outcomes for the young people to support an overall rating of 'good'. The current young person said that he had found it very difficult to share the home with another child. Now that he is on his own again, he is much happier and more settled.

The young person has been excluded from college twice. Unlike his peer, he has engaged with educational opportunities in the home. The registered manager, head of education and the young person's tutors have ensured that he continues to improve his skills in key areas.

The young people receive good quality health care, including specialist services when required. Counselling from the child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) team has helped their progress.

The young people are very well consulted on matters relating to their daily lives. They do not find house meetings beneficial, but prefer key-working sessions.

The remaining young person enjoys a wide range of fun activities with the staff. He explained that he had been to Thorpe Park recently. He also plays rugby regularly. As a result, his level of physical fitness has improved. He explained how he likes to eat a healthy diet, but knows that he should include more fruit and vegetables.

The young person is making steady progress with his independence skills. The staff support him very well and use an incentive chart to help him to meet his targets. The staff help him to manage his budget and they compile a weekly planner with him. This programme includes laundry, shopping, menu planning and keeping his bedroom clean and tidy. The staff have also supported the young person to try to find suitable accommodation.

The young person showed the inspector his bedroom. This is a homely and well-kept small room. As a young man approaching the age of 18, he has outgrown it. The young person is very proud of his pet hamster and fish, which he cares for to a very high standard. He is not happy that he has been offered accommodation where pets are not allowed. The manager and staff recognise that this young person's pets are an important part of his life. They are advocating for him to have accommodation where he can take his pets with him.

Another young person, who has recently moved on from the home, has written a message to the staff. 'I'm going to miss you all to the moon and back. I promise I will

call every day to check up on everyone. Thanks for looking after me, you have done a great job everyone.'

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

The home keeps young people safe from harm. There are clear risk assessments for each young person and all of their activities. Resident and visiting pets are also risk assessed. The staff have clear strategies to help them respond to all areas of identified risk.

The behaviour management plan specifies that the young person must not be restrained. There have only been three restraints since the last inspection. These involved the other young person and were all carried out for valid reasons.

The staff helped a young person to reduce the frequency of their self-injurious behaviour. As a result, each individual episode became less risky. They encouraged the young person to choose less damaging ways to reduce tension. The staff made it clear that they would seek medical advice if the young person placed herself at risk. The young person responded to this well. She took increasing responsibility to keep herself safe.

There have been no incidents of young people going missing. Although there has been some bullying, the staff have managed this well. The young people have experienced fewer serious incidents since April 2017.

The staff use rewards and consequences to help them manage behaviour. The three rewards and the single consequence were all fair and relevant to the young person's needs. The staff receive monthly consultations with an experienced residential services practitioner. They find it very helpful to discuss the young people's behaviour. This helps the staff to develop new strategies to support their practice.

The home has good safeguarding arrangements in place. All staff receive regular training in child protection. They have access to clear instructions on the office wall about what to do if there is a concern about a child.

The staff files met regulatory requirements at the last full inspection. These are at the head office, 88 miles away. It was not possible to go there on this occasion. The full files will be inspected during a planned visit to head office. The three staff files seen in the home were incomplete. They contain only training certificates and a limited and incomplete collection of supervision notes.

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

Leadership and management remains the home's weakest area and still requires improvement to be good. In spite of this, there have been improvements in some areas.

Four out of the five requirements made at the interim inspection have been met in full. The requirement made under the leadership and management quality standard is partially met. The mix of young people is no longer a problem, because one of them has moved on. The home's IT systems have improved. This requirement has been repeated because there are new areas of concern, as follows.

Fire safety tests have not been monitored effectively. Fire alarm checks recorded in the new log have not all been conducted at the recommended weekly intervals. There are gaps of between eight and eleven days. There were only three fire alarm tests in June.

Completed fire logs should be kept safely in case they are needed for reference. The log covering the period up to 26 April 2017 had fallen apart. Some pages were missing, including those showing the fire alarm checks. The home is not able to produce evidence that these were completed on time.

The manager does not ensure that staff complete and date all incident reports. These form an important part of the young people's records.

Staff are not always supervised in line with the company's supervision policy. Staff did not know how often supervision should take place. The manager accepted that the quality of supervision had slipped in recent months. Supervision notes are not always retained on the staff files.

The manager explained that although his home is now fully staffed, the company sometimes moves staff between the homes. This makes it difficult for managers to track supervision. It is also a challenge to maintain good attendance at team meetings. Some team meetings have taken place with only half the team present, and no managers.

There is a damp patch on the ceiling in the downstairs toilet. The broken lock on the door to this room has been waiting for repair for several months. This could lead to a compromise of the young people's or staff's privacy.

The second requirement from the interim inspection was made under quality standard 12. This is now met. The home has kept the two young people safe and ensured that there was no sexual contact between them.

The third requirement about the home's statement of purpose is met, but a new shortfall has arisen. The home used door alarms for several months to safeguard the two young people. These are not mentioned in the statement of purpose. There are also typing errors, including a reference to another children's home. The requirement has been repeated.



The fourth requirement under regulation 35 was about recording restraints. This is now met.

The fifth requirement was about the need to notify Ofsted of significant events. This has also been met.

A new requirement has been made about level 3 qualifications. The home has two employees whose appointments predate April 2015. This means that they should by now have completed their level 3 qualifications.

Problems with the company's training provider have hampered progress. Although this is not the home's fault, the excessive time taken to complete this award means that three years on from registration, the young people are still not looked after by qualified staff.

The registered manager is an experienced, qualified social worker. He holds a level 4 qualification in leadership and management and is working towards level 5. He has a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths include a cohesive, child-centred and caring staff team. The manager and his deputy work well together. They have an 'open door' policy and provide staff with readily-available support. The manager works shifts and would never ask the team to do anything that he would not do himself. He confirmed that this has created a positive, nurturing atmosphere in the home. Several staff have requested to come to work there.

The manager is aware that the home's paperwork 'is not as it should be'. He says that there have been challenges with time management. His priority is always the young people. The home has been through a turbulent period and management monitoring is the first casualty.

The manager promotes tolerance and equality. He monitors the quality of care and produces six-monthly reports on the home. The independent visitor's monthly reports also help to drive improvement.

The manager maintains positive relationships with other agencies. The manager has a strong sense of justice. He is assertive in advocating for the young people's rights.

The home continues to provide a good quality environment for the young people. The lounge is bright and well kept, homely and comfortable. The kitchen is clean and well equipped. There is a tidy, medium-sized garden with enough space for some outdoor activities.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

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:** SC471725

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Aspirations Care Limited

**Registered provider address:** 5a Hare Lane, GLOUCESTER GL1 2BA

**Responsible individual:** Christine Cameron

**Registered manager:** Ian Wilson

## Inspector(s)

Heather Chaplin, social care inspector

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