

# 1263124

Registered provider: Autonomy Plus Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is the first full inspection that has been undertaken since Autonomy Plus Limited, a private company, purchased the home in September 2017.

The home is registered to accommodate five children who have a learning disability.

**Inspection dates:** 24 to 25 January 2018

**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 **good**

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

**Date of last inspection:** not applicable

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** not applicable

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Children receive individualised care and support from staff members who know them well. Staff are caring and sensitive to children's needs, and they develop

good relationships together.

- Children are supported well to express their views and opinions. Staff support and encourage children to use alternative methods of communication to enable children to express their views and make choices.
- Children enjoy a variety of play and social activities, and their hobbies and interests are encouraged. Children go to local leisure and recreation facilities such as the swimming pool, cafés and restaurants. These activities benefit the children.
- Children were seen to be happy and relaxed in staff's company. Parents, carers and social workers speak highly of the care and support given to children. It is evident that there is good collaborative working between the staff, social workers and families.
- The arrangements to safeguard children are good, and the home is well led and managed.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The registered manager must thoroughly scrutinise all incidents in the home to look for triggers and trends and ensure that there is a good audit trail in relation to accidents.
- The registered manager should review the use of sanctions, based on children's individual needs.
- The registered manager should ensure that staff have refresher training in autism awareness and augmented communication.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not applicable		

## 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>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>The leadership and management standard requires the registered person to enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that promotes children's welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the person to:</p> <p>Understand the impact 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;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (2)(f)(h))</p> <p>In particular, thoroughly scrutinise records in relation to sanctions, incidents and accidents, to look for triggers and trends.</p>	30/04/2018
<p>35: Behaviour management policies and records</p> <p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ('the behaviour management policy') which sets out:</p> <p>The measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 35 (1) (b))</p> <p>In particular, review the use of sanctions for individual children to ensure that this is the most appropriate measure to use, and keep under review.</p>	30/04/2018

## Recommendations

- Ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11) In particular, staff should receive refresher training in autism awareness and augmented communication.

## Inspection judgements

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

Children receive good quality care and individualised support. Staff are enthusiastic, and place the well-being and safety of children at the centre of their practice. Staff build good relationships with children, and children said that they like living at the home.

Children learn to be more independent and are encouraged to take part in a range of household activities and chores. These include helping staff to prepare and cook snacks, making drinks, laying the table for meals and clearing the table afterwards. Families recognise the progress that children are making. A parent said, 'My child has come on beyond anything we can imagine. We put it down to the care he receives.' Another parent said, 'My son's social skills have improved.'

Staff encourage children who have communication needs to express themselves, and to make choices. Staff support them to use symbols when needed. Parents and carers said that they consider that their children's communication skills have improved since being in this home. A carer gave an example, and said, 'My son's speed and construction of sentences has vastly improved.'

Children enjoy a wide range of social and leisure activities. These include visiting local cafés and sports centres. Photographs are displayed around the home of the activities they have taken part in. Children benefit from these activities, which helps their self-esteem and well-being.

Children attend full-time education, and there is effective communication between school, home, parents and carers.

Children are healthy, and a healthy lifestyle is encouraged. They contribute to the development of menus, and said that they like the food. Children know what is on the menu and showed the inspector the menu for the forthcoming week; this is presented in symbol format so that the children can understand it.

Children have access to all healthcare professionals, and specialist support is provided if required. Consequently, their health needs are met.

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

The arrangements to safeguard children are good. The registered manager has not made any referrals to the designated officer since the home was re-registered, and there has not been a need to make any referrals to the multi-agency safeguarding hub. All staff receive safeguarding training, and safeguarding is an agenda item at all team meetings.

Parents, carers and a social worker who were consulted with during this inspection said that they feel that children are safe. One parent said, 'Absolutely, he is safe', while another carer said, 'I have no concerns about his safety.' There are currently no concerns in relation to child sexual exploitation, children going missing from the home, or internet safety.

Staff are promoting positive behaviour effectively. Restraint is not used. Staff are provided with comprehensive behaviour support plans that guide them well about how to support children to manage their emotions and feelings. Parents, carers and social workers are regularly involved in the update and review of these plans. This is one example of good collaborative working.

Staff maintain records in relation to incidents in the home, and the registered manager reviews these records. Incidents are discussed at staff meetings in order to reflect on what happened, and to evaluate staff practice. However, the current recording system primarily focuses on the regular evaluation of 'serious incidents'; other incidents are recorded in different formats, and in the sanctions records. This weakens the ability to monitor and evaluate all incidents effectively.

At the time of this inspection, detailed conversations took place in relation to the use of sanctions. Currently, sanctions are used as a 'learning tool' for all children. Sanctions may include the loss of an activity or the use of their individual iPad. Records viewed demonstrated that other approaches, such as restorative justice, are not currently used. The registered manager reviews all records of sanctions, and comments on whether they are appropriate. Staff have devised a child-friendly format of the sanction record that includes the use of symbols. They use this document to seek children's views about the sanction used.

A social worker confirmed that she regularly visits the home, and reviews the incidents and sanctions records for one child. She said that she critiques these records, and evaluates them. She said that these are also discussed at the child's review. At present, she considers that the use of specific sanctions is having a positive outcome for the child. She added that restorative justice has been used in the past. She said, 'His behaviour has improved immensely.' Data shows that sanctions for this child are helping to decrease incidents of challenging behaviour.

The registered manager said that the use of sanctions would be reviewed on an individual basis for all of the children, and that methods other than sanctions will be

explored.

Children are safeguarded by an effective recruitment and selection process. The registered manager ensures that all of the required vetting checks are completed prior to staff commencing work.

Children live in a home that is kept safe and is well maintained. The registered manager ensures that regular checks are undertaken on the home's utilities. The home's locality assessment is comprehensive and clearly identifies the known risks in the area, and services that are available to children.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

This is the first full inspection that has been undertaken since Autonomy Plus Limited purchased the service and the home was re-registered. The registered manager and staff said that this transfer has been managed well and has not affected the children negatively.

The registered manager has the skills, experience and knowledge to manage the service. She has completed the level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare (England).

The home's statement of purpose has recently been reviewed and an updated copy has been sent to HMCI. This is a detailed and informative document.

The registered manager has yet to complete a six-monthly evaluation of the care provided to children. This is due to be completed in March 2018. However, she has updated the home's development plan that identifies where improvements are needed. In addition, she ensures that there are regular visits by the independent visitor. The registered manager responds effectively to recommendations made by the visitor.

This inspection has identified that the management oversight of records relating to incidents and accidents requires more thorough scrutiny. This is because not all incidents are fully evaluated in order to look for triggers and trends. In addition, there is not always a clear audit trail in relation to accidents, to demonstrate the action taken, and to ensure that parents are informed.

Staff are provided with detailed placement plans that guide them well about how to meet children's needs. The placement plans are regularly reviewed and updated, and are countersigned by parents, carers and social workers. Risk assessments identify known risks and how these are to be managed, and reduced. These documents are regularly updated.

Parents, carers and social workers were very complimentary about the quality of care provided to children. Collaborative working is good. A social worker agreed and said,

'The staff are very good at keeping me and parents informed. They are open to suggestions, and to change.' A parent said, 'The staff are friendly. I have only positive things to say.'

Leaders and managers ensure that staff receive mandatory training and specialist training to meet the needs of the children. However, staff have not recently received refresher training in autism awareness and augmented communication.

## **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 differences 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 whom 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:** 1263124

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

**Registered provider:** Autonomy Plus Limited

**Registered provider address:** Unit 5 Bath Road Business Centre, Bath Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1XA

**Responsible individual:** Steven Tayler

**Registered manager:** Shelly Barnes

## Inspector

David Kidner, social care inspector



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