

SC425985

Registered provider: Autism Initiatives (UK)

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven young people who have an autism spectrum disorder.

The current manager was registered with Ofsted in November 2017.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 June 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: 30 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/06/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

27/03/2017

Interim

Declined in effectiveness

24/11/2016

Full

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
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child, which are kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36(1)(b)(c))</p> <p>This is specifically in relation to staff signing relevant documents.</p>	31/07/2018
<p>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. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))</p>	31/07/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should show the timescales for staff supervision, induction, the probationary period and the disciplinary process. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations and quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- Ensure that staff seek to meet the child's basic needs in a way that a good parent would. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations and quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
This is in relation to staff helping young people to keep their bedrooms clean and ensuring that damaged furniture is removed.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This home provides care for young people who have autistic spectrum disorder. All of the young people have verbal communication at different levels and a wide range of needs. However, each young person's specific needs are fully known and understood by the staff. As a result, each young person can communicate and be involved in their care.

A parent said, 'Staff know my son extremely well. If they are unsure of a noise that he makes they will ring and ask what this means.'

The inspector spoke and interacted with three young people during this inspection. They all said that they were happy and safe, and that staff were 'great'. One young person said, 'I love it here and would not want to be anywhere else.' Throughout the inspection, warm and supportive relationships were observed between the young people and the staff, who all responded sensitively to the young people's presenting behaviours. The positive relationships that exist are helping young people to make good progress across all aspects of their lives.

All of the young people attend the company's school. Each young person receives individual support and a curriculum that is specifically designed to meet their educational needs. Young people have excellent attendance and are making good progress. Several of the young people have moved on to the organisation's further education setting in preparation for their transitions to semi-independence.

All of the young people are in good health. The home's staff are working closely with a dietician to ensure that young people's physical health improves. Some young people are walking to and from school and to activities. This has improved their core strength and stamina. In addition to this, the home has made subtle changes to the food that young people eat. For example, they now have brown bread instead of white bread and skimmed milk instead of full-fat milk. Young people talked about the portion control aid that staff have bought. One young person said, 'It is great. I am learning about how much food I should have on my plate.'

Young people enjoy a wide range of activities and experiences. These include going on walks, swimming, attending aqua exercise and horse riding. One young person is involved in different community projects. For example, the young person often makes sandwiches and cakes for the homeless and goes out with staff to deliver them. The young person is also trying to raise funds for the home and is planning a garden party. This shows that young people are involved in the community, that they have fun and that they have empathy for others.

Staff know young people well. As a result, young people feel able to express their worries and feelings. The staff are supportive of young people's emotional well-being, engaging several young people very well with a range of activities to distract them from becoming overwhelmed by their feelings about forthcoming moves from the home.

The young people have different arrangements for seeing their parents. Some see their parents weekly, while others see them in the school holidays. The details of these arrangements are highlighted in young people's placement plans. This means that staff can prepare young people well for these visits, which helps to ensure that these occasions are positive experiences for all.

Young people live in a large home that provides plenty of space for each young person. There have been significant improvements to the downstairs areas, such as new sofas,

dining tables and chairs, and soft furnishings. However, young people require help with cleaning their bedrooms. Also, broken furniture needs disposing of, or fixing, to prevent injuries to the young people or staff.

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

Young people said that they were safe at this home. Parents, safeguarding professionals and social workers spoken to at this inspection all said that they were confident that the home takes the necessary action to safeguard young people well.

Effective planning minimises the risks to young people's safety and well-being. Risks are clearly identified in young people's care plans. Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's risks and vulnerabilities and there are clear strategies to guide staff in supporting young people in a safe way.

External complaints and allegations are dealt with promptly. There is clear communication with social workers, parents and the designated safeguarding officer in accordance with statutory guidance. Records identify any action taken and the outcomes following the conclusion of any investigations or complaints.

Some young people have left the home without the permission of the staff. Due to the young people's vulnerabilities, they have been reported to the police as missing. However, on the occasions that this has happened, staff have followed the young people and have been able to bring them home safely. The young people receive a return interview from an independent person. This good practice helps to identify any concerns or preventative work that can be undertaken with the young person.

Sometimes, young people are held for their own safety, or that of others. Well-maintained records show the reason for the intervention and the technique used, and confirm that the young person and the staff are debriefed after any incident. The manager has good oversight of the records and evaluates them effectively.

The recruitment of staff is very thorough. This means that all staff are suitable to work with the young people. Safeguarding training is provided for staff and this is regularly updated to ensure that their knowledge remains current.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a new manager at this home. She has extensive experience of working with young people and adults, and is currently undertaking a level 5 management qualification. She provides strong and effective leadership and is supported in her role by a qualified deputy manager.

There has been a significant turnover of staff. This is due to the manager identifying shortfalls or weakness in the original staff team and making the necessary changes. As a

result, staff morale and care practices have improved significantly. One member of staff said, 'It is totally different now, and although we still need to improve, we are getting there.'

The statement of purpose clearly sets out the ethos and objectives of the home and is kept under regular review. However, although social workers confirmed that they have received updated versions of the statement of purpose, the most recent update has not been sent to Ofsted.

Staff report that they are supported by the manager well. They can discuss any concerns and are able to reflect on their practice during regular supervision sessions. Staff said that team meetings have improved and that during the meetings they often discuss research-related practice, alongside how they are caring for the young people.

All staff hold, or are undertaking, a suitable childcare qualification. This means that staff have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of young people.

Parents and professionals spoken to during this inspection were extremely complimentary about the care that young people receive at this home. One parent said, 'Staff are very knowledgeable about autism and how this relates to my son's behaviour. He is in the best place for his needs.' Another parent described her daughter as a 'different child'.

At the last inspection, the manager was asked to ensure that all documents and records were signed by all staff members. There has been some improvement, but further attention to detail is required. For example, some young people's risk assessments have not been signed by all of the staff, and some staff members who have not attended staff meetings have also not signed to say that they have read the minutes. This does not ensure that all staff are aware of any potential changes to young people's plans.

Similarly, the manager was asked to ensure that the home had a workforce plan. A plan was developed. However, it still requires further amendment to reflect the agreed timescales for the supervision of staff, the induction and probationary periods and the disciplinary process.

There are appropriate internal monitoring systems in place. The reports of the independent visitor robustly support the manager's understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. The home has close working partnerships with a variety of professionals. This helps to ensure that young people receive individualised care.

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: SC425985

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Autism Initiatives (UK)

Registered provider address: Sefton House, Bridle Road, Bootle, Merseyside L30 4XR

Responsible individual: Katharine Silver

Registered manager: Hayley Tasker

Inspector

Pam Nuckley: social care regulatory inspector

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