

1263124

Registered provider: Autonomy Plus Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company. The home is registered to accommodate five children who have a learning disability.

The registered manager has been in post since the provision was newly registered in September 2017.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 November 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: 24 to 25 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/01/2018	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that the design of the home should include any necessary adaptation to meet the needs of children with disabilities or specific health issues. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.24) In particular, review the current arrangements for mealtimes to ensure that children's dining experiences are enhanced. In addition, ensure that posters and information around the home do not detract from a homely environment.
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5) In particular, ensure that risk assessments in relation to the use of audio monitoring devices provide detailed information for the need of this practice.
- Ensure that children are supported and encouraged to view and contribute to their placement plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19) In particular, ensure that these documents are presented in an accessible format to enhance children's understanding of their care and support needs.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children continue to receive good-quality care and support. Staff develop positive relationships with children and children said that they are happy living here. Parents speak highly of the care that children receive. One parent said, 'My child loves it there, he has come on leaps and bounds.' Another relative, who said, 'The staff have taught him so much and I have no concerns at all,' echoed this.

Staff support children effectively to express their views and opinions. In addition, staff have developed a wide range of documents and visual supports in an accessible format. This assists children's communication and understanding. The one exception to this is with regards to children's care plans. Further work is required to ensure that these documents are accessible to children.

Parents say that they notice that their children make progress and learn to be more independent. Children's plans clearly evidence the progress they make and identify new

goals.

Children enjoy an extensive range of activities and leisure opportunities. Children said that they like the activities and speak fondly about their recent summer holidays. They said that they had lots of fun.

Staff support children to visit their families and friends. One child expressed his wish to meet with his friends more regularly. Staff have been proactive, and he now meets his friends more regularly and they visit him at home.

Staff support children to maintain and improve their health. This includes regular visits to the doctors, dentist and the optician. At the time of this inspection, a child explained to the inspector what had happened when he visited the dentist and optician that afternoon. He was excited and proud that he went.

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

The arrangements to safeguard children are good. The registered manager acts promptly when safeguarding concerns are raised. She communicates effectively with safeguarding agencies and other professionals. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and demonstrate a good awareness of safeguarding processes. Children are safe, and parents consider that their children are safe.

Children receive effective help and support to manage their emotions and feelings. Staff are provided with comprehensive behaviour support plans and risk assessments that guide them in how to meet the children's individual needs. Staff have a good awareness of the known risks, and how these are to be managed and reduced.

Since the last inspection, there has been a significant reduction in the use of sanctions. The registered manager thoroughly monitors and evaluates incidents and accidents. She looks for triggers and trends, and if there is any learning to be explored.

Physical restraint is not used. However, staff have held a door to keep others safe when a child has become very upset. The registered manager closely monitored this practice to ensure that it was necessary and proportionate.

Due to one child's complex support needs, he is monitored during the night via the use of an audio alarm. This is an invasive measure and may impose on his privacy and dignity. Leaders and managers regularly review this practice with the child's parents and social worker. However, the risk assessment in relation to this practice is not detailed.

Leaders and managers ensure that a thorough recruitment and selection process is followed and that children live in an environment that is safe and well maintained.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

An experienced, well-trained and qualified registered manager manages this home. She places the needs of the children at the centre of her practice. She has completed the level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare (England).

The registered manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. Quality assurance processes are effective, and recommendations made by the independent visitor are responded to effectively. However, this inspection has identified that some documents are not always well written, clear or concise. This includes documents in relation to incidents and children's daily records.

Staff receive regular and effective supervision. They speak well of the support provided by the registered manager. They benefit from a wide range of training, including both mandatory training and specific training, to equip them to support the children well. Since the last inspection, staff have received training in alternative methods of communication and autism spectrum disorder. Staff say that this has given them a greater understanding of matters in relation to children who have autism spectrum disorder and how to communicate more effectively.

Placement plans identify how children's individual needs are to be met. These documents are reviewed regularly and updated. These are completed together with parents/relatives and placing authorities and demonstrate good partnership working. However, children's placement plans are not presented in an accessible format to encourage and support them to view and contribute to their placement plans.

Parents and relatives spoke well of the staff team and the communication between them. A parent said, 'The staff are lovely and have my son's best interests at heart. They are warm and loving.' An advocate commented that staff support the children to progress in their language and social skills by encouraging them to have a voice.

Children live in a homely and well-maintained home. It is decorated to a good standard. However, discussions with the registered manager have identified that a review of the current dining arrangements should be undertaken to ensure that children's experiences are further enhanced. In addition, the home has a number of unnecessary posters/information on the walls that detract from the otherwise homely environment.

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: 67 Roundpond, Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 8EB

Responsible individual: Steven Tayler

Registered manager: Shelly Barnes

Inspector

David Kidner, social care inspector

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