

# 1271607

Registered provider: Options Autism (4) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home provides care for children and young people with a range of complex needs and/or autism spectrum disorder and associated learning disability. Children and young people are aged between eight and 18 years old.

A qualified registered manager is in post.

**Inspection dates:** 11 to 12 December 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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

**Date of last inspection:** newly registered service in May 2018

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

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## 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 is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13(1)(b)(2)(c))</p>	17/01/19
<p>Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20(2))</p>	17/01/19
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34(1)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, this is in relation to following disciplinary processes.</p>	17/01/19
<p>If the person who is in day-to-day charge of the children's home proposes to be absent from the home for a continuous period of 28 days or more, the registered person must give notice in writing to HMCI of the proposed absence. (Regulation 48(1))</p>	17/01/19

### Recommendations

- Those with a leadership and/or management role should be visible and accessible to staff and able to deliver their leadership and/or management responsibilities. Any registered manager employed in the home should have sufficient capacity to ensure that the Quality Standards are met for each child in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.7)
- A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.13)  
In particular, ensure that the quality of supervision is consistent for all staff.

## Inspection judgements

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

Young people have made progress in the short time they have been living at the home. This is particularly evident with young people's education. Some young people have been out of education for a significant period, but now attend daily and achieve good attendance. All children attend the education provision that is in the same grounds as the home.

All young people told the inspector that they like living at the home. One young person said it is 'fun'. Young people take part in a variety of activities, including swimming, army cadets, ice hockey and visiting a farm. Activities for young people are individualised and well suited to their hobbies and interests.

Staff build positive relationships with young people. The staff team is supported by a clinical team which role models therapeutic-led care. Decision-making is carried out as a team. Multi-agency meetings take place weekly. This promotes consistent care for young people and their progress is reviewed regularly.

Staff support young people to develop their independence skills. Young people are taught skills that will prepare them for their future, such as doing their laundry and cooking meals. Young people have free time away from the home without staff supervision and manage this safely.

This home is split over two houses. Each house is well maintained. Any damage caused within the home is repaired quickly. Each house is clean, tidy and spacious. Young people were observed to be relaxed and happy in the home during the inspection.

Staff support young people to spend time with their family or speak to them on the phone. Parents have described the home as an 'excellent service'.

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

Staff act appropriately when young people are missing from care and return home interviews are undertaken. This provides young people with the opportunity to talk to someone independent of the home about why they went missing and what happened when they were away. Young people do not go missing often. This is an improvement for one young person, who used to frequently go missing from care.

Staff implement behaviour management strategies consistently and in agreement with the clinical team. Sanctions are rarely used, with a focus on positive behaviour incentives, such as praise and reward.

Staff undertake key-work sessions with young people to gather their views and talk about risky behaviour, such as self-harm, and the dangers of the internet and unhealthy relationships. This helps young people to understand these risks and learn how to keep

themselves safe. Risk assessments provide clear guidance to staff on how to manage each young person's risks effectively.

At times, staff do have to physically restrain young people. When such incidents happen, they are generally proportionate and necessary to keep young people and others safe. However, during one incident a restraint was not managed as well as it could have been, and an unapproved hold was used. The registered manager acted quickly to ensure that young people remained safe. Lessons have been learned and reflective practice has been undertaken with the staff involved and additional support has been provided.

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

The registered manager is experienced and passionate about the home. However, due to unforeseen circumstances she was off work for six weeks. Ofsted were not informed about this, although alternative arrangements were put in place. The registered manager spends a block of time at the home and then manages the home from a distance during the times she is not there.

It has been recognised by leaders and managers that the management structure is not stable. Therefore, managers from other homes within the company have been offering support. Recruitment is underway to bring stability to the management arrangements and to minimise the impact on young people.

Staff recruitment practice is safe. Senior managers show a commitment to over-recruit staff, which is good. This is because staff retention has proven difficult. Experienced staff who were due to mentor the less experienced staff have not been able to carry out this role for several reasons, including sickness and leaving the company. The core staff team has been supported by the registered manager and the clinical team to ensure that the young people's needs are met.

A thorough induction has been completed with all new staff. Some staff lack experience of working with children in a residential environment. There is a commitment to ongoing training and development to build on staff confidence and skills to develop their practice and offer a therapeutic approach. This work is ongoing.

The registered manager has been proactive in building relationships with the local community and she is working collaboratively with the police. She has reviewed incidents when the police have been called to the home and identified a clear pattern. The registered manager has agreed to work reflectively with the staff to ensure that the police are only called when necessary. This has been effective, with a reduction in the number of times the police have been called to the home.

Staff receive regular supervision. The quality of supervision is variable, with one supervision record showing that the session lasted for 15 minutes in comparison to others that last two hours. However, staff report feeling supported and staff practice is consistently addressed.

The registered manager does address staff practice to ensure that young people receive good and safe care. However, she needs to ensure that disciplinary processes are fully concluded prior to staff returning to work to ensure that decisions are transparent and not

pre-empted.

The registered manager has recognised the areas for development within the home and has put an action plan in place to reflect these.

## **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:** 1271607

**Registered provider:** Options Autism (4) Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Heath, Alcester,  
Warwickshire B49 5JG

**Responsible individual:** Mark Williams

**Registered manager:** Sonia Bennett

## Inspector

Lisa O'Donovan, social care inspector

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