

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 managed by an organisation. 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: 30 to 31 May 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/06/2018	Full	Good
30/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/06/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff—</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)((iii)(v))</p>	26/07/2019
<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—</p> <p>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—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the staff receive training about extremism, internet safety and have the required level qualification in childcare.</p>	26/07/2019
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p>	26/07/2019

are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	
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Recommendations

- Any agency or bank staff should meet the requirements in regulation 32(4) regarding mandatory qualifications and the registered person should consider their skills, qualification and induction necessary before they commence work in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.16)
- Staff should record information on individual children and young people in a non-stigmatising way, that distinguishes between fact and opinion. Information about the child or young person must always be recorded in a way that is helpful to them. Records represent a significant contribution to the child or young person's life history. 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4 and 14.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people receive bespoke packages of care, which include personal care, education, healthcare and a wide range of activities. This carefully tailored approach means that young people are thriving. They are increasingly becoming more independent and are more confident of seeing to their personal care needs with varying levels of support.

A parent said that her son was 'in a good place'. This was because the daily routines and the support provided by staff to the young person had helped him to settle and, she said, 'He is happy'.

The staff know the young people well and understand what is important in each of their lives. The staff consistently follow well-informed plans that are tailored to meet each young person's personal needs. Staff work effectively with therapists and social workers to ensure that young people continue to receive the right support.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with the staff and enjoy spending time with them. One young person shared that he particularly enjoys 'winding up the staff' by asking to watch films that are certified as above his age. This amuses the young person and is a game to him, as he knows what he can and cannot watch. These positive relationships are helping young people to make good progress across all aspects of their lives.

Young people's health and emotional well-being continue to improve. Staff have a good

understanding of each young person's specific health and emotional needs. They plan effectively for visits that a young person may find difficult, such as attending the dentist. As a result, young people can see the dentist and receive the treatment that they need.

Transitions into and out of the home are planned well. The registered manager makes sure that she has enough information to ensure that young people are compatible. The manager meets with the young person, their parents and the linked professionals before any decision is made to offer a place at the home. Placements are not made unless the staff and the manager know that they can meet the young person's needs.

The registered manager is not afraid to challenge professionals when she feels that they are not acting in the best interests of young people. She is currently supporting one young person and his family as he prepares to move into adult services. This transition has been fraught with difficulties. A move has now finally been agreed, although a date has not yet been confirmed.

The young people have a wide range of communication skills, and varying levels of comprehension and complexity of needs. Staff are skilled communicators and are adept at using various methods of communication. This means that they can seamlessly communicate with each young person using the young person's preferred communication style. Therefore, their views and wishes can be heard and acted on.

Staff have aspirations for young people. One young person would like to live independently when he is older. Staff are continually helping him to develop the skills he needs to be as independent as possible. For example, he plans his food budget, prepares meals and does his laundry.

Young people enjoy a wide range of activities, which include horse riding, learning to play drums, swimming and going to the cinema. Their involvement in enjoyable activities is having a very positive effect on their emotional health and well-being.

The arrangements for keeping in touch with parents are carefully managed and are very well supported. Accordingly, young people have regular opportunities to spend time with those people who are important to them. A social worker said that this consistency and support has been instrumental in reducing their young person's anxieties, as they now know when visits are taking place and what the plans are for them.

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

Young people said that they feel safe. This is because the staff know that maintaining the young people's daily routines is of paramount importance in helping to allay young people's fears and anxieties. Young people feel that they can talk to the staff about things that worry them, including about events or issues that they hear about on the news, such as climate change and terrorist attacks. The staff help young people to work through their anxieties and to consider what is real or fake news.

However, on one occasion, the staff had not fully considered the advice that was given

to one young person regarding research that they were undertaking and the potential internet sites that the young person may have accessed. This could have left the young person at risk of harm. Consequently, staff would benefit from training on extremism and internet safety, especially as some young people have access to the internet on their phones. Immediate action was taken to address this.

Parents and professionals spoken with said that they are confident that their child is safe, and that staff act to protect their children from harm. Staff have regular discussions and safeguarding training.

Young people do not go missing from the home. This is because of the high staffing levels, close supervision and the staff's understanding of the young people's vulnerabilities. Young people are rarely restrained, and even then, only for their safety and well-being. On such occasions, records are well recorded.

Staff work positively and confidently with young people to help them to find the best way to express their emotions and moderate their behaviour when they are upset. Accordingly, young people are more tolerant of one another and can show empathy and concern for others.

The home is well maintained, and there is an ongoing plan for the refurbishment of the property and the development of the rear garden. Young people and their families are involved in choosing the decor of their bedrooms, with one young person especially thrilled with his Gruffalo-themed room.

Staff recruitment and vetting are sound. The home uses bank staff, to whom basic safeguarding information is provided during their induction. However, there is currently no system for ensuring that they fully understand their role and the action to take should they have a concern.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A highly committed and enthusiastic registered manager leads the home. She has extensive experience and holds several relevant qualifications. An experienced and qualified deputy supports her.

The staff team has now stabilised, although the home continues to use regular bank staff to support young people. Several of the staff do not yet hold a qualification at the required level. While permanent staff are booked onto a relevant course once they have completed their probationary period, this is not the case for bank staff.

The staff are supported well by the registered manager. They said that the home is much more settled and that they are increasing in confidence in their roles. There are regular opportunities to discuss practice issues, research and the staff's personal development, during team meetings and one-to-one supervision sessions.

The statement of purpose is current and provides helpful information about the care and

support young people can expect to receive. Social workers are complimentary about the staff. One social worker said, 'Staff are sensitive to the young people's needs and appear to have appropriate specialist training and knowledge.'

The registered manager is acutely aware of the home's strengths and areas for development. For example, record keeping has improved, but there are still some issues that need to be addressed, including making sure that the records are consistently completed to a good standard, so that they tell the story of the young person's time in the home. They also need to be up to date, signed and dated.

Monitoring of the home is improving. The registered manager said that the independent person had helped her focus on what needed to be prioritised. Internal monitoring by the manager is secure. The home has good working relationships with a variety of professionals, which means that young people receive the help and support that they need.

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

Chris Scully, social care inspector

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