

# SC055780

Registered provider: Autism Initiatives (UK)

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

A private company owns this home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight young people who have an autism spectrum disorder.

The current manager was registered with Ofsted in October 2010.

**Inspection dates:** 5 to 6 September 2019

**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:** 21 November 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/11/2018	Full	Good
14/11/2017	Full	Good
29/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/12/2016	Full	Outstanding

## 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
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))	31/10/2019
The registered person must ensure that all employees—  undertake appropriate continuing professional development;  receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))	31/10/2019
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children.  The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (1)(3))	31/10/2019

### Recommendation

- The duties and responsibilities of the local authorities and others who deliver children's services with regards to safeguarding children and set out clearly in the statutory guidance 'Working together to safeguard children'. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.2) In particular, have regard to the safe recruitment of staff and ensure that the start and end dates of the staff's previous employment are recorded in full on their application form.

## Inspection judgements

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

Young people are thriving. They enjoy very positive relationships with the staff that help them to grow in confidence and provide them with the skills that they need to manage different situations. A parent said that the change in their child since coming to live here is 'remarkable'.

Young people have bespoke care packages that are tailored to their individual needs. Staff have excellent knowledge and understanding of the diverse and specific needs of each young person. Staff are committed and work tirelessly to improve the outcomes and life opportunities for young people. Ultimately, young people make steady and sustained progress across all areas of their development.

Young people are becoming much more independent. They make informed choices on all aspects of their care and support, including choosing their meals, purchasing clothing, and choosing their activities. Young people are increasingly confident to engage in activities in the community and to use public transport. This is a significant achievement for the young people and is due to effective planning by staff.

Staff are skilled communicators. They use a range of resources effectively to enable young people to have a voice. Staff understand that some young people need time to process questions and the staff ensure that they are given the time and space to do this.

Transitions in and out of the home are a positive experience for young people. Parents are complimentary about the support provided to them and their child during what can be a confusing time for young people. Young people's anxieties are greatly reduced as staff carefully and sensitively inform them of what is happening next and introduce them to their new home.

The registered manager and staff are strong advocates for young people. They have the young people at the centre of everything that they do. The manager and staff continually think 'outside of the box' to see how issues can be resolved, for example reorganising areas of the home to support individual young people continuously. This approach has resulted in a significant reduction in young people's anxieties and negative behaviours.

Parents and family members' wishes and feelings are valued highly by the manager and staff. Parents said that they feel listened to and that they receive lots of support from the manager and staff. They said that the staff had helped them to think differently about how they carry out specific tasks with their child at home. This means parents spend quality time with their children. Contact arrangements are planned effectively, and young people enjoy spending time with their families.

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

Safeguarding practice at the home is good and promotes the welfare and safety of the young people. Staff are trained in safeguarding and understanding child sexual exploitation, county lines, e-safety and radicalisation. This means that they have the skills and knowledge to observe and identify any potential concerns.

Contextualised safeguarding is at the heart of everything that the staff do. They continually reflect and analyse situations to consider any environmental factors and extenuating circumstances that have had an impact on the young person. This enables staff to think creatively to reduce these issues and revise the support that they provide, for example by adapting and reorganising the layout of the home.

Behaviour management strategies and support are effective. Staff understand the subtle changes in young people's behaviour and body language and respond accordingly to prevent an escalation in the young person's anxieties. For example, this could involve stepping in front of a visitor and moving them from blocking a young person's means of exiting a room. As a result, there has been a reduction in incidents of negative behaviour. Physical interventions are rarely used and always as a last resort to protect the young person or others.

Each young person's bedroom is designed to meet their specific needs. Some young people have a very sparse-looking room; however, due to careful planning, they are now beginning to tolerate soft furnishings and posters on the walls. Some areas of the home are looking tired and worn. The manager is aware of this and a programme of refurbishment is underway.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are sound. However, the application form for new staff would benefit from asking for the actual start and end dates of previous employment rather than just the month and year.

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

A highly committed and enthusiastic manager leads and manages the home. Her enthusiasm is infectious and provides the foundation for the very good care and support each young person receives.

Since the last inspection, the two deputy managers have left. The organisation has only just appointed to these posts. As a result, some management tasks have been missed. Some staff supervisions are not up to date, although the manager has prioritised the supervision of new staff and those who have been involved in incidents. The statement of purpose does not reflect the changes to the layout of the home. These shortfalls do not negatively affect the care provided to young people.

The home has received one complaint since the last inspection. This has been investigated, but the complaint log has not been updated with the investigation notes or the outcome. Other records and documentation are well maintained and clearly show the

young person's journey. Photographs are used effectively to bring the documents to life and contribute well to the young person's experiences in the home.

Staff are well trained and have a thorough understanding of the young people. They recognise each other's strengths and use these well to support young people. The registered manager said, 'I could not do my job without the staff team; they are resilient and have been through a tough time. But they always turn up to work with a smile on their face. They are here for the young people, and it is not just a job to them.' Several social workers and parents echoed this.

Partnership working is a key strength of the service. The registered manager and staff are not afraid to challenge professionals or escalate their concerns if they feel a young person is not getting the right support. This has resulted in very positive outcomes for individual young people.

Internal and external monitoring is effective. The manager has a keen understanding of the strengths of the home and the areas for development. She ensures that the staff, professionals, families and young people all have a voice in helping to drive forward improvements. Constructive actions are highlighted in the reports so that the registered manager can improve and develop the home.

## **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:** SC055780

**Provision sub-type:** Residential special school

**Registered provider:** Autism Initiatives (UK)

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

**Responsible individual:** Katharine Silver

**Registered manager:** Karen Taylor

## Inspector

Chris Scully, social care inspector

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