

SC055780

Registered provider: Autism Initiatives (UK)

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides is run by a registered charity. It provides care for up to eight disabled children.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 27 October 2010.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 April 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor.

Date of last inspection: 5 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/09/2019	Full	Good
21/11/2018	Full	Good
14/11/2017	Full	Good
29/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Four children are currently living at the home. Two children who regularly stay at the home for short breaks were not present at the time of the inspection.

Children admitted to this home are poorly matched. This is because the registered manager has failed to properly consider the range of needs and compatibility of children admitted to the home. This has an impact on children's experience of living at the home as staff put restrictions in place to keep some children separate from others. For example, when one young person is upset, staff use radios to alert other staff to the location of that young person. While this may keep children safe, it compromises children's choice and control over how and when they can access areas of their home.

The day-to-day care in the home is arranged in a way that means children are subject to a number of restrictions on their ability to access all areas of their home. For example, two children sleep in an area of the home that can only be accessed through doors with keypad locks on them. This prevents other children from entering these areas. These arrangements are in place as some children can present a risk to each other. In addition, the kitchen is kept locked and all children only access it as part of an arranged activity, such as baking. The manager does not keep these restrictions under review to ensure they remain necessary or proportionate.

Some children do not receive effectively planned care. For example, one young person's care plan is out of date and does not contain information about the restrictions of liberty that staff can use to support this young person safely. Furthermore, a copy of the legal authority to impose restrictions was not available in the young person's file. This means that staff do not have access to important information about how to care for the young person and the restrictions they are permitted to use. In addition, the restrictions of liberty in use at the home in relation to this young person are not aligned with the restrictions staff are authorised to use. The legal authority for the use of restrictions was due to expire very shortly and the manager had not requested an extension or planned how the young person should be cared for once it elapsed.

Young people's methods of communication are well understood by the permanent staff team. Some young people present complex behaviours and staff work hard to understand what young people are trying to communicate through their behaviours. As a result, staff can anticipate potential triggers, take action to address them and alleviate young people's anxieties.

The home is spacious and young people enjoy using the bespoke outdoor play equipment in the back garden. However, some areas of the home have been damaged and at the time of the inspection, repair work has not taken place. For example, there are some holes in plasterwork and damaged flooring in some areas

of the home. In addition, some young people's bedroom furniture is damaged and requires replacing.

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

Children do not always receive the high level of supervision and support they need to keep them safe. For example, one young person does not receive sufficient supervision from staff during the night. Staff conduct regular welfare checks on the young person, but no staff are based in the same part of the home as where the young person sleeps. The manager has failed to identify the risks associated with the lack of supervision. This young person has complex needs and is unable to independently request help or support from staff. This lack of supervision means that this young person is at risk of harm.

The manager has failed to take effective action when risks to children's safety have been identified. For example, keypad entry locks have been added to doors which lead to areas where some children's bedrooms are located. The locking mechanism hinders safe evacuation of the area in the event of fire. The risk this presents to the safety of children and staff was identified in the home's fire risk assessment, but the manager did not take action to address the risk. The manager made arrangements for the lock to be removed during the inspection.

Not all risks to the safety and well-being of children are adequately assessed. For example, one young person sleeps in an area of the home which is locked when the young person is in bed. This young person has complex needs and, in the event of a fire, is not able to evacuate the building safely without staff assistance. The manager has not assessed the risks of this young person's sleeping arrangements or ensured that staff have clear instructions about how the young person's evacuation should be organised.

The registered provider has failed to ensure the home's fire risk assessment is of a sufficient standard. In addition, during the inspection, unsafe practices in relation to the fire safety of the home were identified. For example, there was a bolt on the fire exit in the basement area, and night-time fire drills, which would test the safety of the children's sleeping arrangements, had not taken place.

Some children have prescribed medications that should be administered to them as and when needed. Due to their complex needs, children are not always able to tell staff when they feel pain or need to take their medication. The manager has not provided written guidance for staff about all the medication given to children in this way. This does not support the staff to consistently identify if and/or when children need medication.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Poor leadership and management practice have impacted on the safety and well-being of children. The registered manager has not ensured that all risks to children are adequately assessed and she has not always taken effective action when risks to children are identified.

The registered manager has failed to lead the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos set out in the home's statement of purpose. Some children who live at the home are not well matched and can present a risk to each other. In order to manage these relationships and maintain these placements, the manager has arranged the day-to-day care of the home in a way that separates the children but also places restrictions on all children's freedom to access all areas of their home. The registered manager has not kept these significant restrictions to children's liberty under regular review. Furthermore, she has not considered the impact these arrangements have on the lived experience of disabled children who cannot consent to these restrictions.

Staff spoke positively and enthusiastically about their roles. They told the inspector that they felt supported by their managers. However, not all staff receive regular supervision from the management team and this does not support continuous professional development.

Staff lack knowledge of how any restrictions on the liberty of children should be agreed and applied. As a result, they have not challenged whether a restriction is necessary or proportionate. Staff demonstrated a lack of understanding of the impact restrictions of liberty have on children.

Shortfalls were identified in the experience and training of staff to meet the needs of children. For example, one new member of staff has not yet received safeguarding training or training in the safe use of physical interventions. The manager has failed to identify the risks to children when they are supported by insufficiently trained or experienced staff.

Children do not receive care from a consistent staff team. There has been significant use of bank staff and agency staff to cover gaps in the staff roster. In addition, the manager has not ensured that night-time supervision levels are sufficient to meet the needs of all children and care for them safely.

Internal and external monitoring systems are not sufficiently robust to identify the shortfalls in the quality of care provided to children. For example, the independent visitor does not apply sufficient scrutiny or challenge to the quality of care provided at the home. In addition, the visitor has not visited the home since August 2020.

Six requirements have been made to address the shortfalls identified during the inspection. Four requirements are subject to compliance, and progress will be closely monitored by Ofsted.

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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(vi)(b)(d))</p>	06 June 2021
<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>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p>	06 June 2021

<p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child.</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))</p>	
<p>*The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home;</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose.</p> <p>that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(2)(a)(c))</p>	<p>06 June 2021</p>
<p>*Privacy and access</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p>	<p>06 June 2021</p>
<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p> <p>In particular the registered person must ensure that—</p>	<p>06 June 2021</p>

medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23(1)(2)(b))	
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must – Provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of a fire; Ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as is reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in the case of a fire. (Regulation 25(1)(b)(d))	06 June 2021
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44(1)(2)(b))	06 June 2021

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and children, 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

Sophie Thomson, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2021