

# SC361167

## **Options Autism (5) Limited**

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

### **Information about this children's home**

This service provides care for children and young people who have autism spectrum conditions. The children and young people may also have additional medical and/or complex needs.

This setting is an independent residential special school registered as a children's home. It is owned and operated by a private company. The service offers specialised education, and care for up to five children at present. Some young people stay until they have completed their education at age 19 years.

The registered manager resigned on 30 November 2020. The deputy manager is in day-to-day charge of the home and is in the process of undertaking her registration with Ofsted.

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.

We undertook a monitoring visit on 4 February 2021 and the report is published on Ofsted's website. We undertook a full inspection on 4 and 5 August 2021 and this received a provisional judgement of inadequate, subject to quality assurance and a further monitoring visit on 9 August 2021.

**Inspection date:** 18 August 2021

### **This monitoring visit**

At the full inspection, the home was suspended due to serious and widespread failings that compromised children's safety. Senior managers from the organisation communicated with Ofsted that they had put measures in place to safeguard children and invited Ofsted to reconsider the need to suspend the service. On 9 August 2021, Ofsted returned to the setting to review works undertaken. As a result of this visit, Ofsted lifted the suspension notice and imposed a condition on the home's registration to reduce the number of children from 22 to five. Four

compliance notices were also raised following this monitoring inspection. The purpose of this visit is to monitor progress and children's welfare.

Leadership and management at the home are poor. Managers do not know what is happening for children on a day-to-day basis and this does not support improvement in children's experiences, progress and safety.

Despite additional safety measures to reduce the risks associated with children climbing fences, there has been a further incident. This raises questions about staff supervision of children. Although the incident was referenced in a child's daily record, managers were unaware of this matter until inspectors raised it with them. As a result, managers were unclear what, if any, action had been taken to understand what had happened and to try and prevent the same thing happening again.

Restraint practice is poor. Staff physically move children to different areas of the home to try and manage behaviour. On one occasion, staff shut a distressed child in the soft playroom while a staff member sought help. The child was then moved into the basketball court and locked in there with staff. As a result of poor behaviour management, the child had to be given medication to help him calm down. Behaviour management techniques, including the use of restraint and medication, are inappropriate and disproportionate. This leaves children vulnerable to the risk of harm.

Oversight of restraint incidents is ineffective. Managers are not identifying issues of concern as outlined above. Children are not receiving a debrief to check on their welfare and for managers to understand their views about what happened. In addition, staff are continuing to use techniques that they are not trained in. Failure to recognise poor behaviour management practice limits the scope for improvement and this continues to compromise children's welfare and safety.

One child's records showed that he had a bruise and another child's records detailed a health issue. The child is receiving medication for the health issue, but this is not being recorded by staff. Managers did not know about these issues until inspectors asked about them. Only then did managers explore what had happened and what this may mean for children. A lack of monitoring means that potential safeguarding and welfare issues are not identified and addressed.

Managers have not ensured that an agency nurse has a suitable disclosure and barring check that included being vetted against the children's barred list. This means that they have not taken steps to ensure that agency staff have been recruited safely. This issue was rectified immediately after the inspection.

Direction for staff about how to manage daily routines is lacking. For example, staff do not routinely make children's beds or ask them what they would like for lunch. Children are given sandwiches that they don't like and then staff make them something else. This shows a lack of planning and thought for children's wishes.

Despite the shortfalls identified at this inspection, some positives were noted. Extensive work is under way to improve the home environment for children and bedrooms are being extensively refurbished and redecorated. Staff are continuing to undertake training to develop the skills they need to care for children. In addition, children have had some positive experiences. For example, a child enjoyed baking cakes with staff and another enjoyed a drive out to a fast-food restaurant.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the situation at the home. The requirements raised at recent inspections, including the four compliance notices, will be reviewed at future inspections.

## **Recent inspection history**

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
04/08/2021	Full	Inadequate
22/10/2019	Full	Good
27/06/2018	Full	Good
14/11/2017	Full	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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare;</p> <p>help each child to express views, wishes and feelings.</p> <p>(Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff gain children's views and wishes.</p>	17 September 2021
<p>The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community; and</p>	17 September 2021

<p>that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies.</p> <p>(Regulation 9 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff provide opportunities for children to take part in activities in the community</p>	
<p>*The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and wellbeing.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being.</p> <p>(Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all children's health needs are understood and issues acted upon and that arrangements for administering and managing medication are improved, including reviewing protocols for administering 'medication when required' and administering medication covertly.</p>	<p>31 August 2021</p>
<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—</p> <p>that staff—</p>	<p>31 August 2021</p>

<p>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;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that the home and grounds are maintained to protect each child from avoidable hazards to their health and safety.</p>	
<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</p> <p>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;</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)(c)(h))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that the quality of care provided to children is monitored.</p>	<p>31 August 2021</p>
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p>	<p>17 September 2021</p>

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that each child’s relevant plans are followed.</p> <p>(Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff follow children’s care plans and keep them up to date.</p>	
<p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children’s home a statement (“the statement of purpose”) which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it;</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.</p> <p>(Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that the statement of purpose is kept up to date.</p>	<p>17 September 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>medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them.</p> <p>(Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff follow the home’s procedures and are suitably trained to administer medication.</p>	<p>17 September 2021</p>
<p>After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must—</p>	<p>17 September 2021</p>

<p>take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home.</p> <p>If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home—</p> <p>the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 25 (1)(a) (2)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) is complied with.</p>	
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p>	<p>17 September 2021</p>



<p>in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or</p> <p>in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.</p> <p>(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff are suitably qualified, skilled and experienced.</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.</p> <p>(Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff receive regular supervision and an annual appraisal.</p>	<p>17 September 2021</p>
<p>*The registered person must prepare and implement a policy (“the behaviour management policy”) which sets out—</p> <p>how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children’s home; and</p> <p>the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p>	<p>31 August 2021</p>

details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure.

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.

(Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

In particular, ensure that incidents of restraint are recorded in line with regulation, managers review and evaluate incidents of restraint effectively and that children are spoken to after an incident by someone who was not involved in it. In addition, review the use of ground restraint techniques, ensure that these are agreed by relevant parties, that individuals are risk-assessed and that staff are trained to use these restraint techniques.

\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

## **Children's home details**

**Unique reference number:** SC361167

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

**Registered provider:** Options Autism (5) Limited

**Registered provider address:** Atria, Spa Road, Bolton BL1 4AG

**Responsible individual:** Anne Adams

**Registered manager:** Post Vacant

## **Inspectors**

Jackie Line, Social Care Inspector

Michelle Spruce, Social Care Inspector

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