

SC361167

Registered provider: 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 with autism spectrum disorder. The children 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 eight children at present.

A new manager was appointed in December 2021. She is suitably experienced and is working towards the level 5 qualification in management. She intends to apply to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 1 February 2022

This monitoring visit

On 13 December 2021, Ofsted carried out a monitoring visit at this home. Following this visit, a compliance notice was raised in respect of issues relating to medication management. This monitoring visit was made to review the progress managers and staff have made in meeting the steps outlined in the compliance notice. In addition, inspectors reviewed progress made by the provider in addressing requirements identified at the full inspection in relation to the protection of children, enjoyment and achievement, leadership and management, staff supervision and safer recruitment practice.

At the time of this inspection, eight children lived at the home. Since the last inspection, no children have moved out and one child who used to live at the home has returned following a well-planned transition.

There have been continued improvements to the home environment and the refurbishment of a second house has now commenced. Sensitive and well-thought-

out arrangements have been made to minimise disruption to children while the works continue. No new health and safety concerns were identified during this visit. A new maintenance team has been employed to ensure that the site remains safe and functional for children. However, delays due to COVID-19 and supply issues mean that work to replace the fencing remains ongoing.

The arrangements for medication management have been reviewed and overhauled. Robust monitoring systems have been implemented by managers, giving enhanced oversight and accountability for the safe administration of medicines. All senior staff have undergone competency training. Medication arrangements have been reviewed and medicines are now safely stored where children live. As a result, medicines are now administered to children at the times prescribed. On the rare occasion when errors have been identified, managers have acted immediately to address these and take the appropriate action to safeguard children. Medication records, while improved, do not always provide clarity on when certain medication should not be taken in conjunction with other types of medication.

Shortfalls identified at the last inspection in relation to safer recruitment have now been addressed. More robust recruitment checks help to ensure that suitable people care for children.

When concerns are raised about staff practice, managers respond promptly and take action to safeguard children and staff while investigations are undertaken. They report issues to partner agencies as required. At the time of the inspection, some investigations were ongoing. Where investigations had concluded, there was evidence that managers had acted on recommendations raised to bring about improvements.

Some children can access the community and experience trips to local leisure attractions. For other children, this remains a challenge and progress is slow. This is a missed opportunity to enable all children to overcome their fears and experience life in the local and wider community.

There are challenges in the recruitment and retention of staff. This has meant that, at times, children have not received the staffing levels as set out in their plans. In addition, children have sometimes been unable to undertake leisure activities. While managers have taken some steps to mitigate risk, they have not reviewed the arrangements to understand the impact on children of operating the service at reduced staffing levels. As a result, this is an area of vulnerability that has the potential to compromise children's welfare and progress. In addition, some children receive funding so that they can access additional staff support. There is a lack of clarity about this and what the additional support is for, which indicates a shortfall in care planning for children.

Managers have started to consider the approach to staff supervision. Some staff receive single-subject supervision to address issues. However, staff still do not

routinely receive supervision and not all staff have had an annual appraisal. This is hindering staff development and further improvements being made in the quality of care being provided to children.

Team meetings are taking place and overall communication between managers and staff is better. As a result, staff are kept up to date and are receiving more direction about what is expected of them as a team.

It is not always clear from staff rotas and records which home staff are working in and so which children they are caring for. This is not good practice and means that information is not readily available to review now or if needed in the future.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/10/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/08/2021	Full	Inadequate
22/10/2019	Full	Good
27/06/2018	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 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> <p>that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies. (Regulation 9 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all children are supported to access the community, and that plans are progressed and implemented without delay.</p> <p>This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is repeated.</p>	20 March 2022
<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>	1 March 2022

<p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d)(f))</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 statement in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and</p> <p>that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that there is a clear understanding about what any additional support is for and that this is clearly documented in children’s plans, followed and reviewed.</p>	1 March 2022
<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. (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>This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is repeated.</p>	20 March 2022

<p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4;</p> <p>ensure that the records are kept up to date; and</p> <p>retain records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (2)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that clear records are maintained about when and where staff work at the home.</p>	<p>1 March 2022</p>
---	---------------------

Recommendation

- Care must be taken to ensure that prescribed medicines are only administered to the individual for whom they are prescribed. Medicines must be administered in line with a medically approved protocol. Specifically, that the medication record reflects when certain medication should not be taken in conjunction with other types of medication, as outlined in advice notes. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards,' page 35, paragraph 7.15)

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: Children's home

Registered provider: Options Autism (5) Limited

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

Responsible individual: Anne Adams

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

James Tallis, Social Care Inspector

Jackie Line, 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 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: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022