

# 1263124

Registered provider: Autonomy Plus Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private organisation. It provides care for up to five children with learning disabilities and additional needs. At the time of the inspection, three children were living at this home.

The registered manager left on 16 April 2021 to become the responsible individual. The home has been without a registered manager since April 2021. The original manager has resumed this role and has applied to re-register with Ofsted.

### Inspection dates: 6 to 7 September 2022

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>requires improvement to be good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 30 May 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Inadequate

### Enforcement action since last inspection:

A compliance notice was issued following the full inspection on 29 and 30 May 2022, when the home was judged inadequate. The notice related to regulation 13, the leadership and management standard. On 5 July 2022, a monitoring visit took place and Ofsted assessed that the provider had taken sufficient action to meet the compliance notice.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/05/2022	Full	Inadequate
18/10/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/06/2021	Full	Inadequate
09/09/2019	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

Since the previous full inspection on 30 May 2022, three of the same children have remained living at this home. The quality of the environment has improved, with many areas of the home now redecorated with some new furniture. The appointment of a maintenance person has significantly contributed to the improvements. This ensures that repairs are attended to quickly, and the general upkeep of the home and grounds provide a pleasant environment for the children. Children get involved with choosing colours and new items for the home. One child had great fun as he assisted in painting the outside of the home. The garden and extensive grounds provide a lovely resource for play and use of a trampoline, swings and a climbing frame.

A 19-year-old young person recently moved to an adult residential setting. A comprehensive and creative support plan to assist with this move helped to reduce anxieties and successfully prepare the young person. Social stories and many visits contributed to this positive move. No other children have since moved in to the home. When this occurs, children are provided with an excellent guide to the home, which includes photographs and picture symbols to aid communication.

Children are supported to get out and about, taking part in many activities and opportunities to follow their interests. Children enjoy use of public transport that provides a means of travel as well as a social and life skill. Attendance at a youth club is popular, along with trips to the park and swimming. Photographs are taken to capture these memories. However, there is a significant delay in creating a photograph album for children to revisit when they choose.

Children are generally settled, making progress, and attending education. Positive relationships are evident between children and team members. However, the continuity of care from consistent care givers is significantly hindered by the regular use of temporary staff. Although the same agency staff are used where possible for familiarity, at least 13 agency workers and some bank staff have been employed at this home in the last three months, covering 124 shifts.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

There remains a lack of curiosity when senior staff are reviewing records. One incident report described how a child reported that a member of staff was hurting them. Through the management review, this was not considered within safeguarding procedures. In addition, there is no evidence that the child was spoken to about this comment. Not all incident reports are followed up with a debrief with the child or staff member involved, a failing that was identified by the independent person during the monthly visit of July 2022. The manager and senior staff have

failed to fully understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children.

Since the last full inspection, there have been very few incidents. No child has been restrained, there have been no incidents of children going missing, and no complaints received. Leaders and managers have appropriately notified Ofsted of two incidents when they were concerned for the safety of a child. Each incident was managed effectively, and suitable action was taken to avoid any repetition. The reduction in the number of incidents is a positive reflection on how well children feel settled in the home.

Leaders and managers have made improvements to the recruitment procedures, developing a tighter process to check the suitability of prospective members of staff. Additional training has been delivered to the care team on safeguarding and the procedures to follow. Team members report that the training and management support since the last full inspection has been helpful in their professional development.

Many policies are under review, including the one in relation to behaviour support. At the last full inspection, it was identified that this policy was not fit for purpose and this shortfall remains. As leaders and managers have not addressed this requirement, it is repeated at this inspection.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

The manager has now applied to Ofsted for registration. Leaders and managers have made significant progress in the development of the home since the inadequate inspection judgement in May 2022. A new responsible individual has been appointed. This enables the manager to relinquish his former role and receive management support. Six out of the nine requirements are met. In addition, a consultant is available, who is supporting the management of the home.

Leaders and managers have a plan with a clear focus on the development of the home. The consultant is contributing to the development plan by sharing good and outstanding practice from their own registered children's homes. Training opportunities are available through the consultant's provision, and the manager has a scheduled visits to some of these homes to enhance his professional development. The arrangement with the consultant to broaden knowledge in residential childcare is an important improvement. Particularly as the organisation's other services only provide care to adults.

Recording systems are streamlined and there are further plans to introduce a new suite of policies. Many of the new systems are not yet fully embedded. Staff members have access to records through tablets, removing the barrier of having to be near a desktop computer. This enables team members to make more timely records and be able to read up-to-date documents. The quality of report writing still requires improvement to ensure that they represent a significant contribution to the

child's life history. For example, a record states that a child went to youth club. This short statement misses an opportunity to record the experience for the child, what they did at the youth club, if they have friends, and if they enjoyed the experience.

Staffing remains a concern as recruitment is ongoing. In the absence of a full staff team, there remains a reliance on temporary staff. A review of the rotas confirm that staffing ratios are now adhered to. However, to support this, there is a reliance on agency staff, particularly at weekends, who make up 50% of the care team.

## What does the children's home need to do to improve?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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>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>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</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; and</p> <p>that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e))</p>	9 September 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> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p>	9 September 2022
<p>The registered person must ensure that the employment of any person on a temporary basis at the children's home does not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs. (Regulation 31 (1))</p>	30 September 2022
<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 keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2))</p>	30 September 2022

## Recommendation

☐ The registered person should ensure that the home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them to record significant life events. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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:** 1263124

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Autonomy Plus Limited

**Registered provider address:** 67 Roundpond, Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 8EB

**Responsible individual:** Nicholas Faulkner-Elliott

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Clare Davies, Social Care Inspector

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