

SC032154

National Autistic Society (The)

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a charitable trust. It provides care for up to eight children who may have autism spectrum disorder. Children may have other associated difficulties, such as sensory impairment and/or physical disabilities. At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home.

The home is divided into two houses, with a communal hub and garden. This registered children's home is also part of a specialist school that provides education on site.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2022.

Inspection date: 4 January 2023

This monitoring visit

This children's home was judged inadequate at the full inspection on 8 and 9 November 2022. Inspectors found significant breaches in regulations relating to the safety and protection of children, the leadership and management of the home, restraint and the deprivation of liberty, behaviour management policies and records, and the notification of serious events. As a result of that inspection, Ofsted issued a notice restricting accommodation and issued five compliance notices under regulations 12, 13, 20, 35 and 40.

On 19 December 2022, Ofsted carried out a monitoring visit to review the notice restricting accommodation. The inspector concluded from that monitoring visit that the provider is adhering to the notice restricting accommodation. However, the restriction notice remained in place because the compliance notices were not scheduled to be reviewed at the time of the visit.

The purpose of this monitoring visit was to review the five compliance notices and the notice restricting accommodation. Since the last full inspection, no children have

moved in to this home. This monitoring visit included the review of documents and discussions with the manager, responsible individual, staff and the children living in the home. The inspectors concluded from this monitoring visit that five steps set in the compliance notice with regards to regulation 20 and 35 were not met. These notices have been reissued as a result of this inspection.

There are still significant gaps in staff knowledge around lawful physical restraint practice. Managers and staff have yet to improve their understanding of the new restrictive practice policy. In particular, the guidance around 'unplanned responses', which is the term applied when staff use restraint techniques that are not taught as part of the physical restraint methods permitted in the home. In addition, staff have not had refresher training around the organisation's physical restraint methodology. Inspectors were not assured that the staff had the necessary skills and competency to confidently practice in line with the children's homes regulations. This is detrimental to the safety and protection of children.

Children's individual behaviour support plans record that restraint holds are permitted. However, staff are provided with inadequate guidance about specific restraint holds that are permissible and appropriate for individual children, based on their needs. This could lead to unsafe practice and harm to children.

At the last inspection, the organisation had failed to identify that staff practice had compromised the welfare and protection of children. During this monitoring visit, the inspectors were not assured that organisational procedures had developed. This is with specific reference to the creation and implementation of quality assurance measures of the organisation's physical restraint methodology, and restraint practice within the children's homes regulations.

There have been no physical restraints of children since the last inspection. The manager has oversight of all incidents to ensure that practice is safe and that the views of the children and staff are heard and acted on. Children who are involved in these incidents, including those who have limited verbal communication, have had the opportunity to take part in a structured session with a manager or independent staff member. This gives the children a chance to share their views and feelings and look at strategies to prevent further incidents.

There are improvements to the manager's monitoring of the home. The manager's oversight of incident recordings in the electronic integrated safeguarding system enables shortfalls in staff practice to be identified quickly and responded to. The manager has implemented staff questionnaires and compiled case studies to gather insight into the staff's skills and competencies. Shortfalls in staff practice have been identified and steps implemented to address the concerns.

Organisational procedures had previously prevented the registered manager's oversight. Organisational changes now mean that the registered manager has autonomy over decision-making about care practices for children in the home. There

is an improved understanding of the children's homes regulations, and this is reflected in newly created policies and procedures.

The manager has informed Ofsted of significant incidents; there has been one since the last inspection. Ofsted has had the necessary oversight to ensure that appropriate action has been taken by the manager to maintain the safety and well-being of the children.

The manager has sourced guidance from health professionals to ensure that her staff seek necessary medical assistance for children. This improved guidance helps staff to consistently ensure that children get the correct medical support when required.

Staff are equipped to respond to ligature incidents. Staff have received training to improve their understanding and response to ligature incidents. Careful consideration has been given to internal procedures for managing ligature risks. This includes providing a safe environment for children. The manager has developed a ligature risk assessment to provide information and guidance for staff on how to manage and reduce children's emerging ligature risks.

The children's risk assessments have been developed. This implemented change creates an effective system for the manager, with the staff, to review and ensure that the children's risk assessments are current and effective. The manager will continue to review the content and format of this newly created record to ensure accuracy and efficiency in staff practice.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/11/2022	Full	Inadequate
22/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
21/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
08/01/2019	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
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>protect and promote each child's welfare;</p> <p>make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1)(a) (2)(b)(ii)(ix))</p>	1 January 2023
*Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (2))	29 January 2023
<p>*The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it.</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>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p>	29 January 2023

<p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; and</p> <p>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")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>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 (2) (3)(a)(iv)(v)(viii)(b)(i)(c))</p>	
<p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.</p> <p>The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to—</p> <p>HMCI. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b) (7)(a))</p>	1 January 2023
<p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (2)(a)(b)(c) (5))</p>	1 January 2023

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered persons should ensure that the children's home provides a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. The children's bedrooms must be clean, and any sign of bodily fluids cleaned. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. In particular, all staff should have up-to-date food hygiene training, and the senior team receive relevant risk assessment training. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

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: SC032154

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: National Autistic Society (The)

Registered provider address: 393 City Road, London EC1V 1NG

Responsible individual: Victoria Moss

Registered manager: Emma Knott

Inspectors

Jennifer Fenlon, Social Care Inspector

Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector

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