

SC032154

Registered provider: National Autistic Society (The)

Full inspection

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. These children have lived in the home for several years.

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2022.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

This 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.

Ofsted monitored the provider's compliance with these notices on 19 December 2022, 4 January 2023 and 30 January 2023.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last full inspection, children are now receiving high levels of nurture from staff. This helps them to build good relationships with staff and to trust those responsible for their care and support. Staff give the children the opportunity to broaden their experiences. Children make happy memories with the staff. For example, they go trampolining, on train rides and to the beach for walks. These opportunities help children to grow in confidence and self-esteem.

Children are now making progress. One professional said, '[Name of child]'s quality of life has dramatically changed, seeing the activities and independence tasks that they now are able to enjoy optimises his life.' Staff are creative as they help the children to develop their skills. Children are being helped to understand their emotions and feelings and are now more able to express to staff any concerns they have, including if they are experiencing physical pain. At times, children are unable to control their emotions. The staff provide children with a safe environment and strategies to help them to calm.

Children communicate in their own specific way. For some children, this includes the use of communication aids. Staff understand the impact on children if they are unable to make choices and share their wishes and feelings. Communication resources continue to be developed to enable children to have greater involvement in the decisions about their care.

Children have a bespoke package of education at the on-site school. It is recognised that each child has the right to learn, and plans enable the children to flourish. Improved communication between the home and school staff means that information is shared, which is vital to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Children regularly see their families and benefit from this quality family time. One child's relationship with their parent continues to develop as they build their tolerance to sharing their space and activities. Families say that their children have thrived and progressed because of the quality of care provided by the staff.

Children find transitions difficult. One child's move into adult care will be an overwhelming experience which therefore requires careful and considered planning. The manager is liaising with the child's local authority to understand the progress on transition planning. However, the manager does not have the relevant care plan from the local authority. Clear partnership planning could help to minimise the disruption for this child and reduce any potential fears and anxieties.

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

Staff understand risks to children's safety and their responsibility to safeguard them. Children receive a high level of supervision and support from the staff, which reduces the likelihood of the children being exposed to unnecessary risks. Although children do not go missing, if this was to occur, there are plans in place to assist in locating a child as quickly and safely as possible.

Children's risk assessments are reviewed and updated, particularly when there has been an escalation of an identified risk. Children's risk assessments are individualised and provide staff with detailed guidance to reduce each child's risk of harm. The children are vulnerable when out in the community. The manager has created a location risk assessment which identifies safe places for the children. However, there is no evidence in this report of how the manager has consulted with other relevant agencies to gather intelligence about current risks.

Children's self-injurious behaviours can present in the form of head banging. Revised procedures in response to a child's head injury mean that children receive the necessary staff support, observation and medical treatment. This practice is significant in maintaining the safety of children.

Children live in a settled home where physical restraint is not necessary. Any incidents involving the children are well documented and reviewed by the manager. The strategies used by staff help the children and mitigate an escalation in risk.

A personal emergency evacuation plan has been created for a child. This plan identifies the special arrangements and motivators to help staff to assist the child safely out of the home during an emergency. The plan has been created through consultation with the child's parent and social worker. Action taken by staff must be proportionate to risk and in the child's best interests, and any physical hold would only be permitted if there was risk of immediate harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager recognises that change was necessary to ensure that children consistently receive a good standard of care. Her innovative and hands-on approach to her team's learning and development has vastly improved staff's knowledge and delivery of care. The staff now feel supported by the manager and, as a team, they are enhancing the children's lives.

The manager provides routine practice direction and guidance to the staff, which are strengthened by updated policies and procedures. The manager has clear expectations of staff practice and performance and will take immediate action to address any deficits.

The manager recognises the strengths of the home and the areas for further development and is striving to continue to improve the service and outcomes for children. A development plan helps the manager to respond to the identified

shortfalls in practice. External monitoring arrangements provide an additional assessment of the home. The quality of these reports has improved following the provider's review of these monitoring arrangements. However, the review of children's incidents requires further rigour to provide additional opportunities to improve practice.

Children are cared for by a consistent group of staff. This includes members of the same family working at this home. Operational procedures have been created to maintain professional boundaries. However, there is no policy or procedure detailing the practice expectation for the staff and manager to adhere to.

The manager's approach to leadership is one that promotes transparency and quality of practice. Her monitoring strategies and tools enable her to review children's care to ensure ongoing improvements to staff practice. However, during individual staff supervision sessions, there is an absence of practice reflection. The manager has not had oversight all staff supervision records. This limits her oversight and evaluation of staff performance.

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 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 arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority;</p> <p>that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(iii)(c))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that the manager has a copy of the child's care plan from the placing authority.</p>	14 April 2023
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p>	14 April 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home to ensure continuous improvement. These external monitoring reports should provide an evaluation of staff practice to enable the independent person to form their opinion as to whether children are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home. The review should include the identification of any risks gathered from the consultation with other agencies. ('Guide to the

Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

- The registered person should maintain good employment practice. There is currently no policy regarding the recruitment and management of related employees in response to minimises potential risk. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: SC032154

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: National Autistic Society (The)

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

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Emma Knott

Inspectors

Jennifer Fenlon, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector

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