

# 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, five children were living at the home.

The registered manager has been in post since December 2022.

### Inspection dates: 22 and 23 August 2023

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
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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:** 6 September 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

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

## **Inspection judgements**

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children receive good-quality care and support from staff who enjoy their work. Since the last inspection, the team has grown and has more permanent members of staff. Children develop strong and positive relationships with the adults who support them and who are consistently available to them. Since the last inspection, two children have moved into this home. Introductions and visits were planned as much as time would permit. These two children have settled very well, without any significant incidents. This indicates that they feel safe and secure at this home.

Social care professionals and a parent report that there are good relationships with the manager and adults at the home and say that communication is good. Managers promote effective partnership working, for the benefit of the children. Family members are welcomed into the home, where appropriate. Arrangements are made to ensure that children keep in touch with those who are important to them.

Children are making very good progress. School attendance is very high with children achieving some awards. Children enjoy the many new experiences that are made available to them. A child who was previously restricted in opportunity when out on activities, due to his unpredictable behaviour, has settled so well that he enjoyed a holiday experience in a caravan on a holiday park. Children are supported in developing their independence in the home and out in the community. This can vary from putting socks on without support, cooking a meal, travelling by bus to the shops to purchase food and assisting the maintenance team. Every success is celebrated, and children receive lots of praise. Since the last inspection, children have been given a photo album where the memories are captured of their outings, activities and progress.

Children are supported to actively participate in the daily decisions made about their care. This can involve the use of communication aids, such as photos as a point of reference, symbols and a feelings chart. Short, illustrated stories which describe social situations are created to ensure that children understand what is going to happen and for them to be able to express their views, wishes and feelings.

The house has recently been decorated in some areas, the dining room has yet to be finished once the school holidays are over. The presence of a maintenance team ensures that most repairs are attended to promptly. An upstairs office has recently been vacated to create some additional social space for the children, with plans to have some sensory toys in this room. Although the bathroom for adult use has been fitted with a new toilet and basin, the shower tray has been overlooked and looks unsightly with stubborn stains. Adults who sleep overnight at the home should be provided with suitable facilities.

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

Restraint has not been used in this home for the past year. The low level of incidents, compared to previous years, indicates that children are settled in this home and have an appropriate sense of permanence and belonging. One child, without verbal skills, has experienced a significant reduction in the number of incidents. This is due to the adults having got to know him and his needs very well. In turn, the child has developed trusting relationships with those who support him and offer care and affection.

Allegation management is understood well by leaders and managers. When children have raised concerns about the adults, children have been listened to and the appropriate external agencies have been informed. No allegations have been founded; the local authority is satisfied that correct procedures are followed each time.

Safety plans identify what the adults need to be aware of and how to reduce any potential risk. The change in style of a safety plan is welcomed by staff, who say that it assists in their daily support of the children. Indeed, the adults are not risk adverse and strive to ensure that children are not denied opportunities because of any disability. For example, a child using a wheelchair is supported to plan his first experience of travelling on a train. Children regularly go swimming at a local pool and three children have enjoyed a holiday in unfamiliar environments.

Since the last inspection, the provider has introduced a revised behaviour support policy that is suitable. In addition, the oversight of any record of an incident is promptly reviewed with a degree of curiosity by leaders and managers. This area of improvement is in response to requirements made at the last inspection.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Since the last full inspection, the manager has registered with Ofsted. He has grown in confidence and values the support from the responsible individual. Together, they have an ambitious vision for the development of this home and high expectations for what children can achieve. Leaders and managers have worked hard to improve this service and they have benefited from some external consultation. The commitment from leaders and managers to raise standards is evident as all the requirements and recommendations are met and there is only one new recommendation from this inspection.

Adults who work in this home say that they are supported well through training, supervision and the manager's presence. They are very proud of the children's achievements and of the progress the home has made.

The monitoring and review of practice and records have greatly improved. Leaders and managers are alerted through the recording system that they are required to review when an entry has been made. The adults have improved access to make records, using tablet computers, which means that they are restricted in front of an office-based computer. The manager has designed his working day to spend the first

hour reviewing any safeguarding incidents and reports on children's behaviour. All reports are signed by a manager and monitored if any actions are identified. This ensures that leaders and managers are fully apprised of what activity is occurring in the home, and if there are any difficulties.

Leaders and managers have worked tirelessly to recruit suitable adults to care for children. The success of recruitment has led to far less agency staff being used. When agency staff are present, they are usually regular adults who provide some consistency of care to children. Recently, one adult has been recruited from the agency to the permanent team.

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

### **Recommendation**

- The registered person should ensure that the design of the home provides staff who sleep in the home overnight with appropriate accommodation and facilities to do so. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.26)

### **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:** Michael Evans

## Inspector

Clare Davies, Social Care Inspector

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