

2632330

Registered provider: Positive Steps Specialist Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately operated and provides care for up to 5 children with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments.

At the time of this inspection, 3 children were living at the home. The inspector spoke with all the children.

A new manager has been appointed at the home, who is suitably qualified. The manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 March 2026

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: 26 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2025	Full	Good
11/07/2023	Full	Good
05/12/2022	Full	Good
14/12/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is undergoing refurbishment and redecoration, and some areas have been refurbished. The children are involved in choosing colours and items for the home. Photos of children and staff are displayed throughout communal spaces, giving the home a family feel. Children's bedrooms have received special attention and are personalised to reflect their characters and the things that are important to them. Children love their bedrooms. There are plans to enhance the garden with a sensory space for children.

Children have experienced carefully planned moves to and from the home. Time is taken to ensure that children are given opportunities to adapt to the changes they will face when moving home. Adults support the process at the child's pace, taking into account their needs and how they process information. Multiple visits and the use of social stories reduce children's anxieties. One child experienced a positive move to the home because staff from where they used to live had transferred there. As a result, the move was significantly less disruptive for the child.

All the children are in full-time education. Children attend schools that align with their identified learning needs or individual diagnoses. Children enjoy being at school and have positive peer relationships. There is strong collaborative working between the adults at the home and school staff. When there are concerns about children feeling unsettled at school, there is a positive approach to sharing information and knowledge to help them feel more settled. Adults are supporting children to work on their independence, and each child has tailored developmental targets. The staff creatively capture children's progress and continually celebrate their achievements.

The staff help children to be healthy and happy. Children have balanced home-cooked meals that reflect their individual preferences. The staff encourage the children to participate in activities in the community. This is always in accordance with the children's choice and preferences. Two children attend weekly football sessions and share a passion for the sport. This has facilitated the development of their friendship.

The staff place importance on how children communicate and express their thoughts, feelings and emotions. The communication systems used daily to support children with important discussions are effective. This ensures that children have a voice and are aware that their opinions are frequently considered. Staff consistently use social stories and picture boards to help children process any changes to their routines. Some records are not written in a child-friendly way and do not reflect the caring manner in which staff communicate with the children.

Children regularly spend positive and meaningful time with their families. The staff ensure that the planning of family time is meticulous. This ensures that children have consistent routines. Parents spoken to believe the staff are doing a fantastic job of caring

for their children. The staff support children in gradually building relationships with family members when barriers exist.

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

Children have clear, detailed and effective safety plans that are continually reviewed to reflect changes to the risks they face. Managers ensure that plans reflect what children can do safely in and around the home. The safety plans chart children's progress with tasks such as accessing areas of the kitchen that may cause harm. Staff know children's plans and when higher levels of supervision and support are required. The supervision of children and any restrictions on their movements are appropriate and in line with their personal safety.

There is a robust and effective approach to behavioural support. Staff know children's behaviours and are confident about how to intervene. The effective use of communication systems is central to this support. Staff work diligently to minimise the likelihood of children becoming unsettled or upset. For one child, the use of social stories has significantly reduced their anxiety around transport to school. There has been a marked reduction in incidents relating to the child's anxieties around car journeys.

The new managers have introduced a restorative approach to supporting children with some of their behaviours. Careful and caring communication after incidents provides children with opportunities to reflect on their behaviours and how they process emotions. Children are helped to reflect by engaging in simple activities, such as spending time with the staff involved, making them a drink or writing an apology.

Staff receive specialist training based on children's assessed needs or diagnoses. This has transformed the way that one child is cared for. The staff now have an improved understanding of how the child processes their environment. This has been universally welcomed by the staff. The child's support plan has changed to reflect what has been learned, which has reduced incidents of the child's anxieties escalating.

The system and process for administering children's medication was subject to a medication incident. One child was able to access the area where medication was stored, allowing them to obtain medication that could potentially have caused them harm. The managers have reflected and changed the storage and administration processes to prevent future incidents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has had a change in leadership. There is a new manager and deputy manager. Both have worked together at a different organisation and have significant experience supporting disabled children. The manager is suitably qualified.

The managers have introduced their style of leadership, and this is having a significantly positive impact on the staff's wellbeing. The staff say they feel well supported. They believe changes to work patterns and consideration of individual circumstances have

vastly improved their work-life balance. This is bringing stability to the team and reducing the potential of high staff turnover. As a result, children are receiving consistent care from staff who are happy in their roles.

The managers are aware of the home's strengths and areas for development. The manager has formed productive and positive relationships with senior leaders in the organisation. Leaders fully support changes driven by the manager's vision, which is improving the environment for children at the home. Managers are present and accessible at the home. They are supported by experienced team leaders and an improving team structure.

The manager has introduced an improved approach to staff training and the need for staff qualifications. Days are structured to include time for development and upskilling. This has seen staff more engaged in learning, and they have completed required and more bespoke training for their roles.

Staff receive regular and effective one-to-one time with managers. This is more frequent for new starters and those on probation. The manager is introducing and embedding reflective discussions into these sessions. Staff are embracing the process and seeing how it can improve practice.

The manager uses effective systems to monitor and review children's care. Quality assurance processes are providing the manager the opportunity to reflect on patterns and trends, and this informs action plans. The last review of care, completed by the previous manager, did not consider what is required under that process. Feedback was not considered, and there was not enough evaluation in the report. The new manager is working on a new report and acknowledges the areas requiring improvement. This has not affected children's care.

Professionals spoken to feel that the home provides good care and that children are consistently making progress. They reported highly effective communication and a strong commitment from the staff to ensure the children's wellbeing and safety.

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

Statutory requirement

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The 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
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.	30 April 2026

(Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(4)(a)(b)(5))	
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Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the language used to describe children is appropriate and that records relating to them are written in a child-friendly manner. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2632330

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Positive Steps Specialist Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: 2 Trust Court, Vision Park, Chivers Way, Histon, Cambridgeshire CB24 9PW

Responsible individual: Gary Shorter

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Chris Haines, Social Care Inspector

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