

SC032154

Registered provider: The National Autistic Society

Assurance 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 condition. Children may have other associated difficulties, such as sensory impairment and physical disabilities.

At the time of this inspection, one child was living in the home.

The home is divided into two houses, with a communal hub and garden. Children who live in the home also attend the school that is in the same grounds.

Only the social care provision on this site was inspected. There has been no registered manager since January 2025.

Inspection date: 8 July 2025

Date of last inspection: 3 December 2024

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We identified the following serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection:

- Staff are uncertain about the plans that the charity has for the home. Therefore, staff are anxious about their ongoing employment with the charity. This has created a challenging environment for staff to work in.
- The absence of a manager and lack of effective input from the responsible individual have affected the team's ability to provide an acceptable standard of care.
- The child's experience of care is isolating and mundane. Therefore, there are significant concerns associated with the child's mental well-being.

This assurance visit was carried out following Ofsted receiving anonymous reports associated with the care of a child. Subsequently, Ofsted had credible concerns that a child's mental health was being significantly impaired due to current care arrangements in the home.

Staff's commitment and care for the child have been significantly undermined by the charity's lack of clarity of its long-term plans for the home. Coupled with a lack of presence and guidance from leaders and managers, this has created an unhealthy work environment fuelled with uncertainty and trepidation. Consequently, the child's experience of care is being significantly affected.

Worryingly, staff are not supporting the child to better manage their anxiety and distress effectively. This has fuelled staff's anxiety around their approach to care. Therefore, there is a level of tension that is noticeable in the home. This has created an unhealthy living environment for the child.

Most staff are not confident that they have the skills and ability to support the child in the community. Consequently, the child leads a mundane lifestyle as most of their time is spent either in school or in the home. Additionally, the child is living alone with no company from peers, therefore adding to the child's sense of isolation.

The lack of effective input from leaders and managers has resulted in care practices becoming stagnant. Additionally, the absence of a manager has resulted in offers of help and support from professionals across the charity not being used effectively.

The staff have made their concerns clear to leaders and managers, the child's local authority and the child's family. Therefore, plans are in place to seek more suitable care arrangements that are best placed to give the child more quality of life and provide the level of support that the child needs.

The responsible individual has been clear that no more children will move into the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/12/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/02/2024	Full	Good
22/02/2023	Full	Good
08/11/2022	Full	Inadequate

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, The 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
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a))	1 August 2025
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, asset out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and 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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(ii)(iii)(c))	1 August 2025
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	1 August 2025

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and

promotes their welfare.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose;

ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;

ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child;

understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;

demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—

research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and

feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.
(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC032154

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The National Autistic Society

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH

Responsible individual: Joshua Fitzgerald

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Steve Guirey, Social Care Inspector

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