

SC066565

Registered provider: New Options Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 26 children and young people for between 38 and 52 weeks per year. The 10 flats on site are of various sizes. The provision is for children and young people who have autism spectrum disorder. There is a school on site that most of the children and young people use, and it also caters for day pupils. The home's manager has been registered since 2014.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 January 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 3 July 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/07/2017	Full	Good
19/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/07/2016	Full	Good
17/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained– the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is– in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32(4)(a)(b), (5)(a))	14/03/2019

Recommendations

- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that each child's day-to-day health and well-being needs are met. Staff should work to make the children's home an environment that supports children's physical, mental and emotional health, in line with the approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3).

This is with particular reference to the environment being safe from potential hazards, including trailing electrical cables and broken shards of acrylic.

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

This is with particular reference to the use of generic risk assessment, as this limits the integrity of the document.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children and young people are developing their independence skills, and this is evidenced wonderfully in the 'goal-attainment-scaling' records. Tasks are individually identified to suit the child's or young person's current and expected levels of ability. Photographs show the children and young people enjoying themselves in the community and gaining experience of the world.

The children and young people benefit from positive relationships with staff members, and this helps them to make good progress. The staff talk enthusiastically about the children's and young people's progress and how the good care that the children and young people receive is significant in improving their lives. One child was sat eating spaghetti bolognese that he had helped to cook. On admission, he would eat only liquidised food from a beaker. The staff understand the children's and young people's needs and are focused on working with them in the manner laid out in their care plans. An independent reviewing officer wrote, '(Child's name), you have come a long way since you have been at your placement and this is really good to see.' This progress is far beyond what some parents and professionals were expecting for their children.

The children and young people are engaging in full-time education. Their individual education plans identify their specific needs and abilities. The children's and young people's preferred methods and means of communication are understood well by the staff. The children's and young people's wishes and feelings are heard, and they receive clear responses from the staff. One child used a talking-mat to identify that they like to cook and go to the park. Photographs show this child having fun on a swing. The speech and language team works with the staff to create social stories for the children and young people. One child had a social story to help him better to understand the dangers of climbing.

The children's and young people's transitions to and from the home are managed effectively. Social stories help young people to grasp the details involved in their transition arrangements into and on from the home. Managers assess the needs of the children and young people and identify their suitability for a placement at the home. Children and young people benefit from good support and advocacy to ensure that their needs are met in this and any new provision.

The routine health needs of the children and young people are met. The staff are creative, and implement children's and young people's plans with health professionals to support individual needs. One child has been supported to manage their weight through clear strategies implemented by the staff. This includes pictures that identify appropriate portion sizes, and unhealthy snacks have been replaced with healthy alternatives that still provide the sensory 'crunch' that he craves.

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

High staffing ratios ensure that the children's and young people's complex needs are adequately met. This level of supervision limits the opportunity for the children and young people to be missing from home. On the occasion when a child was missing from home, the staff took immediate action to ensure their safe return. Lessons have been learned to prevent further 'missing' episodes.

The staff have a good understanding of the risk posed to the children and young people. This is minimised through staff having completed relevant training around exploitation and radicalisation, keeping their knowledge current. Physical intervention is not often used. Records are detailed and management oversight is good. The recording system is secure and allows analysis of patterns and trends.

The children and young people are encouraged to undertake their own personal care. Where they need assistance, staff promote dignity and are respectful, using techniques like hand-over-hand washing. The staff are insightful and have a sound knowledge of the children's and young people's behaviours and associated risks. The staff practice is supported by clear care and behaviour plans, and these records also have good clinical oversight. However, some records identified the use of a generic health and safety risk assessment, and this limits the integrity of the document.

Medication arrangements are safe and well monitored. Lessons have been learned from previous medication errors. Procedural changes have strengthened the administration of medication, specifically the 'controlled' medicines.

The staff meet the children's and young people's needs within the constraints of the building. There is an action plan to further develop the home and address the maintenance issues created by the children's and young people's behaviours and the damage that has been caused. Potential hazards in the home include trailing electrical cables and broken shards of acrylic.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home. The management team has a clear insight of the children's and young people's presenting needs. This knowledge is transferred to the whole team of staff, who understand how to support the children and young people.

Staff members speak positively about the home and their manager. They have high levels of training that is pertinent to the needs of the children and young people. This provides the staff with the knowledge and skills to understand the complexities surrounding the children's and young people's behaviours and needs. The manager has focused on ensuring that staff achieve the workforce diploma within the required timescales, however some staff members have not achieved this within the required two years.

Robust recruitment procedures ensure that new staff members are suitable to work with the children and young people. Staff members are motivated, feel very supported and enjoy their roles. The well-monitored supervision process provides good oversight and staff support. The frequency of only five sessions per year is mitigated by other communication methods, including the staff annual appraisals, daily handovers and team meetings. The structure of the staff meetings supports valuable information sharing and management oversight of the care provided to the children and young people.

The manager's hands-on approach and monitoring arrangements ensure that the children and young people enjoy a good standard of care and that their voice is heard. The staff consult the children and young people, parents and professionals to aid the development of the home.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC066565

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: New Options Limited

Registered provider address: Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Heath, Alcester,
Warwickshire B49 5JG

Responsible individual: Graham Norris

Registered manager: Joanne Carter

Inspector(s)

Jennifer Fenlon, social care inspector
Stephen Smith, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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