

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	07/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC405285
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	North East Autism Society
Registered provider address	15 Lumley Court, Drum Industrial Estate, Chester Le Street, County Durham DH2 1AN

Responsible individual	Brian Stoker
Registered manager	Julie Dunlop
Inspector	Michael Dack

Inspection date	07/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. The registered manager and the staff team have addressed the two requirements and two recommendations that were made at the last inspection. This demonstrates their commitment to improve the quality of care provided. Improvements made to the living environment for one young person have been particularly positive. The registered manager said: 'He loves his new bed. Small changes have indirectly seen a reduction in aspects of his behaviour and his presentation.' The formal implementation of impact risk assessments has established a comprehensive assessment of any young person being placed at the home. This ensures that all aspects of behaviours, inclusive of the particular traits associated with young people on the autistic spectrum, are taken into consideration. This provides detailed information that supports the placement care plan in developing strategies and responses to ensure that each young person's particular needs are supported. The young people respond to the responsive and calm environment that is provided, as a result of the knowledge gained, and any strategies which are implemented swiftly and robustly. The registered manager and the deputy manager are passionate about the service they provide to young people and their families. They especially value and respect the importance of working with parents, carers and professionals to ensure that the quality of care is maintained to a high standard. The staff team supports and facilitates contact. This can be in the home itself or in the community. FaceTime is utilised via iPads, which has enabled family members to maintain contact at any agreed time with parents and extended members of the young person's family who may live some distance away. The registered manager and the staff team share enjoyable experiences and personal achievements for young people with extended family members, parents and carers through the use of social media devices. This provides the young people and their families with shared emotional experiences that are celebrated together, creating warmth, security and a sense of family identity. A grandparent said: 'The key worker accessed the "FaceTime" for us with our grandson, which is very important. We also get photos from his days out on activities, which are brilliant.'	

The home has achieved renewal of its Investing In Children Award. The report is extremely positive and comments that the young people continue to be very well, that they are happy, well supported by the staff and have continued to develop a greater level of independence. Everyday practice in the home supports the independence of young people. A social worker said: 'I witnessed him tying his shoelaces and the detail and time he put into getting this right. It was clear he had done this with staff over time, taking little steps.'

Activities continue to develop the young people. Opportunities to go on more conventional activities, such as swimming and trampolining, are combined with 'tubbing'. This is an activity at an approved ski centre that involves sitting in a tub and sliding down an artificial ski slope. On inspection, all of the young people had plans for the evening to go wall climbing, which is a new experience for them.

Transitions are well planned. The staff work closely with placing authorities and parents to ensure that the young people are fully supported with care and attention to detail. One social worker said: 'I had regular communication with the management team, before and during admission. We worked together alongside [name] to create a fantastic transition plan. Staff from both agencies made themselves available at all times.' This level of working together ensures that the young people are fully prepared and promotes a reduction in anxious behaviour that may be evident during new experiences.

There are very few incidents of concerning behaviour and when they do occur, the registered manager ensures that systems and processes are robust and well monitored. In addition, staff are all appropriately trained and experienced to deal with any incident. The introduction of individual roles in staff meetings has provided opportunities for staff development. They have a shared responsibility for chairing and presenting information to each other. This may be about sharing experience gained during training, new ideas or simply chairing the meeting. All of these are positive steps to develop competence in a supportive environment. Sharing ideas and creating opportunities for staff development in such a manner can contribute towards improving the outcomes for young people.

There are no requirements or recommendations made at this inspection.

Information about this children's home

The home provides accommodation for up to four children who have a learning disability. It is operated by a charitable organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/12/2016	Full	Good
07/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/11/2015	Full	Good
05/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/08/2014	Full	Good

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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