

# SC405285

Registered provider: North East Autism Society

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this children's home**

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to four children with learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2010.

**Inspection date: 10 January 2022**

**Date of last inspection:** 24 May 2021

**Judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be 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 requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judged that it has improved effectiveness.

There are three children currently living in the home.

Staff know the children well. The staff work in partnership with the children's parents and the professionals who support the children. The staff know what the children's favourite activities and toys are and make sure that these are available for them. The staff have warm, nurturing relationships with the children. As a result, the children are comfortable and happy with the staff.

The children's care plans and risk assessments are detailed and individualised. These documents provide the staff with clear behaviour management strategies. The guidance that the staff receive ensures that the children's behaviour is managed consistently and effectively.

The manager and the staff have improved the arrangements for the children's family time, and a child now has overnight stays with their family. This helps the child to develop their sense of identity.

The children's views, wishes and feelings are now recorded in their individual 'My Say' file. The staff value and actively seek out the children's views and have a good understanding of how each child communicates. The staff respond appropriately to the children's wishes and views. This helps the children to have control over the care that they receive.

The staff help the children to understand the importance of their education and to have goals for their future. All the children are in full-time education and have good attendance.

Healthy eating for the children is actively promoted by the staff. The staff are creative in helping the children to decide their weekly menu and take part in the preparation of their own meals. The two kitchens in the home provide the space for the children to enjoy their mealtimes.

Since the last inspection, the provider has appointed a new independent person to carry out the external monitoring visits to the home. The reports from these visits are detailed, and recommendations have been made to improve the service. The manager said that she finds these visits and subsequent reports helpful, and these have led to improvements in practice.

The requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection have been met.

The registered manager was on leave for a period and has recently returned to work. In her absence, the quality of care review was not undertaken by the assistant manager. This hinders the manager's ability to reflect on what has gone well and what needs to be improved.

The use of physical restraint has been appropriate and, following the incidents, the manager has reviewed the records and identified where practice could be improved. It is clear from the records that the children are actively consulted to find out their views. However, in some records, it is unclear whether the children's parents and social worker have been informed. This means that the key people in the children's life are not always kept up to date with important information about the children.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the stability of the staff team from time to time due to sickness and absence. There is currently an active recruitment campaign underway to address this. The manager and the regional manager report that the pandemic has slowed down the progress that they wanted to make to develop the service further.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 24/05/2021      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 24/09/2019      | Full            | Good                            |
| 02/10/2018      | Full            | Outstanding                     |
| 19/06/2017      | Full            | Outstanding                     |

## 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, 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         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <p>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.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>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").</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>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</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b))</p> | 11 February 2022 |

## **Recommendation**

- The registered person should ensure that the home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Children and their parents should be supported to understand the nature of records kept by the home and how to access them. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them to record significant life events. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

## **Information about this inspection**

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.

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:** SC405285

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** North East Autism Society

**Registered provider address:** North East Autism Society, 15 Lumley Court, Drum Industrial Estate, Chester-le-Street, County Durham DH2 1AN

**Responsible individual:** Brian Stoker

**Registered manager:** Julie Dunlop

## Inspector

Cherie Chen, Social Care Inspector

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