

SC405285

Registered provider: North East Autism Society

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The 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 dates: 27 and 28 November 2024

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: 10 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/10/2023	Full	Good
16/05/2022	Full	Good
10/01/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
24/05/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home. One young adult had recently moved out of the home and a young child was welcomed into the home.

Children make good progress from their starting points. This is because staff support children in all aspects of their lives. Children make progress with their communication, build their confidence or develop social relationships. All children's achievements are celebrated, no matter how big or small.

Children have secure and trusting relationships with staff. This is one of the strengths of the service. Some staff have worked with the children since their arrival at the home. This contributes to children having stable relationships.

The property is a warm and welcoming environment. Children are the focus of the home, and there are photos of them throughout the home. Children have personalised bedrooms, and the communal areas are well furnished and maintained.

Children make good progress with their learning. Staff help children with their learning in the home and ensure they are well prepared for school. Staff understand the importance of developing working relationships with children's teachers, and this helps children to receive support with new subjects they are learning when they return to the home.

One young adult has experienced a well-planned and supported transition to move out of the home. Staff helped the young adult to develop skills for life and contributed to preparing their new home. This included supporting the young adult to visit their new home and decorate and furnish the property. This helped them have a positive experience to the end of their time living in the home.

Staff support children to spend time with their families. Staff may transport and supervise children while they visit their family in the community or in their home. This helps children keep well connected with their parents and loved ones.

One child's admission to the home has not been planned in line with the home's statement of purpose. Although the home intends to provide planned introductions and assessments of children before their move into the home, one child moved in before visiting or physically meeting any staff. This prevents children from experiencing well-planned and supported introductions to the home.

The statement of purpose holds incorrect information about the home and assessments the service will complete. This has not been reviewed to accurately reflect assessments that are carried out for each child. Therefore, those professionals who commission the service to care for children do not have access to a correct statement about the home.

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

Children receive a high level of supervision in the home. This is because the children who live here need additional support to keep them safer in the home and community. One child is subject to restrictions of liberty, approved by a court. Staff understand how best to support the child to ensure any restrictions are only used when necessary.

Staff focus on children's positive behaviours. This means consequences are not used in the home. Children therefore learn from what is going well and the positive praise they receive. To complement this, children are given certificates and awards that are displayed in the home.

Staff have a good awareness of safeguarding and child protection processes and undertake regular training in these areas. Although there have been no children missing from the home since the last inspection, staff know what protocols to follow and actions to take if a child were to go missing.

Children's plans do not reflect all the children's needs and risks. Plans do not provide staff with clear guidance to reduce the risk of harm. This may lead to children receiving an inconsistent response from staff and leave them at risk of harm.

Staff are trained to physically hold a child as a last resort. The number of physical holds has reduced as staff work with children to help de-escalate situations. After a hold takes place staff speak with the child to explore their feelings. However, managers do not always follow the home's behaviour management policy to speak with a child or staff to evaluate the safety of children or for future learning. This could leave children vulnerable due to a lack of oversight of these incidents.

The manager does not have oversight of all injuries to children. Although staff complete body maps when a child has sustained an injury, the manager does not always have oversight of these documents. This prevents the manager from being able to address any practice concerns and ensure that children get additional help if needed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced registered manager. Feedback from staff was unanimous in that they feel well supported by their manager and the deputy manager. Although there have been changes in staffing, there is a core team of experienced staff who work in the home.

The registered manager knows the children in her care well. There are systems in place to monitor children's progress. This helps the manager to identify how best staff are to support children and identify any areas to improve the quality of care children receive.

The manager has developed positive professional working relationships. This has involved the manager contributing to children's meetings, keeping children central to decision-making and keeping professionals updated.

Staff benefit from regular and reflective supervision sessions. This provides staff with an opportunity to reflect on their practice and hold important conversations about children, safeguarding and training needs. In addition, staff receive an annual appraisal of their suitability for their role and future development.

Staff are provided with training to develop their skills to work with the children in their care. Staff recently employed to work in the home are offered training opportunities to support them in their role. An induction plan ensures that newly employed staff know what their support will be during their induction to the home. More experienced staff hold a qualification to work with children in a residential setting; others are enrolled to complete this.

Safe recruitment practice is embedded. The manager ensures that all relevant information about staff who come to work in the home is gained before they work with children. This ensures that only adults who are safe to do so are allowed to work in the home.

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii))	9 January 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, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i))	9 January 2025

The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and subject to paragraph (6). The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a) (5))	9 January 2025
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	9 January 2025

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: SC405285

Provision sub-type: 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

Joanne Wallis, Social Care Inspector

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