

1271607

Registered provider: Options Autism (4) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for children and young people with a range of complex needs and/or autistic spectrum disorder and associated learning disability. Children and young people are aged between eight and 18 years old. The manager is sufficiently trained to level 5, and experienced within the residential field.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 June 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 11 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/12/2018	Full	Good

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(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The health and well-being standard is that the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff help each child to achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(i))</p>	31/07/2019
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))</p>	31/07/2019
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to - ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(h))</p>	31/07/2019
<p>The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))</p>	31/07/2019
<p>The registered person must ensure that children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—</p>	

<p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p>	
<p>If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (1)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure the completion of regular fire drills in each of the homes.</p>	31/07/2019
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children’s home if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(3)(d))</p> <p>Specifically, if a person has previously worked in a position involving work with children or vulnerable adults, the registered person should seek verification so far as reasonably practicable, of the reason why the employment or position ended.</p>	31/07/2019
<p>The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (a)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that arrangements for, and any restrictions on, contact between the child, the child’s parents, and any other person are well recorded.</p>	31/07/2019
<p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2)(a))</p>	31/07/2019

Recommendations

- The children’s home must produce a children’s guide. The children’s guide must be made available to all children when their placement in the home is agreed (or on arrival at the home if the placement is made in an emergency) and must be age appropriate, provided in an accessible format and explained to each child to

make sure they understand it. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.21)

- 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) Specifically, ensure that computer games are age appropriate.
- A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.13)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Care plans do not consistently show how staff should work with young people. Staff do not update these following changes in care arrangements or to show young people's progress, for example when young people gain the confidence to walk to school on their own. This may affect the consistency of care that young people receive.

Health plans do not clearly show how young people are being supported. For example, when young people access additional therapeutic services these are not recorded. Staff do not make sure that they detail young people's health appointments or note occasions when they refuse to attend these. This means that it is unclear whether young people's health needs are being met.

Staff support young people to visit their families. However, the planning for and outcome of these visits are not always accurately recorded. This means that the arrangements are not always clear.

Young people enjoy being at the home and make good progress. They learn how to socialise and improve their behaviour. Young people are also proud of their own achievements. One young person explained how they are tidier and are now more involved with activities outside of the home.

Young people enjoy a good range of physical activities, such as playing football and attending army cadets. This helps them to develop their independence skills and improve their fitness. Young people also like to spend time playing computer games. However, staff do not always make sure that the games that young people play are age appropriate. This could mean that young people access inappropriate material.

Relationships between young people and staff are good. Young people talk about staff positively. One young person stated, 'It's good to have someone caring for you that you

really get on with and you admire.' Regular key-working sessions help young people to engage with staff and make decisions about their care.

Arrangements to support young people's education are robust, with a school on the same site as the home. Young people make strong progress in this area. Information relating to young people and their education is shared regularly between home and school staff. This supports young people's educational and social development.

Staff complete comprehensive assessments of young people's needs prior to them moving into the home. This helps to make sure that the mix of young people is appropriate, and that staff can meet their needs. Staff help to develop young people's independence skills so that they are confident in looking after themselves when they leave.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The frequency of fire drills is inconsistent. There is confusion regarding who is responsible for the coordination of these across the home's site. Some young people may therefore be unaware of how to respond in the event of a fire in the home.

All entrances to the home are locked. Young people are unable to leave the home independently. For some young people, this is necessary to protect them from significant harm. However, young people's risk assessments lack sufficient detail to show the reason for this restriction. This means that they may be kept in the home without clear justification.

The manager constantly strives to keep young people safe. She diligently responds to safeguarding issues and makes sure that all staff are fully trained in this area. Safeguarding concerns are examined in detail to make sure that both young people and staff are safe. There are good links between the manager and the local safeguarding board. This means that information is shared effectively when necessary.

The number of times that young people go missing from the home has decreased since the last inspection. When young people do go missing, staff respond effectively. This includes searching for young people and liaising with their families and local police. On their return, young people can talk to others outside the home. These actions help to support young people and keep them safe. However, risk assessments relating to some other concerns are not always updated to show how staff should respond.

Staff respond appropriately to challenging behaviours. This is because young people's behaviour management plans are personalised and detailed. These help young people to understand how their behaviours affect others. All staff are trained in physical restraint. This is only used when all other strategies have been tried.

Managers are not aware of the reasons why some staff have left previous positions. This is because procedures do not specify the need for this information. This means that managers cannot fully assess the suitability of staff to work with young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home's management and staffing structure has changed significantly since the last inspection, with over half of the staff team changing. This has been well managed. Staff state that these changes have improved practice. Young people receive care from a more organised and well-informed team.

The manager has a good awareness of the areas that require improvement. A detailed development plan is helping to improve care practice in some areas. However, the manager's monitoring of internal paperwork is insufficient. This means that staff are unable to access all of the pertinent information that they need to support young people.

Some external monitoring also requires development. The independent visitor does not seek the views of social workers or young people's families. This means that they are unable to gain a rounded view of young people's progress.

The home is a pleasant environment that is well cared for by the staff and maintenance team. When damage occurs, it is responded to quickly, showing young people that the adults care about the home. Young people are encouraged to personalise their rooms, and this gives them a sense of belonging.

Staff work well with a wide range of professionals. These include therapists, psychologists and activity coordinators. These relationships help young people to develop.

Staff work in line with the home's statement of purpose. However, the young people's guide is not in an accessible format. Consequently, not all young people may fully understand some details of the home and the staff team.

Staff feel well supported by the management team. They receive regular and reflective supervision. However, minutes of these sessions are variable in quality.

Staff complete a range of training courses, including a basic introduction to the home, and are generally equipped to meet young people's needs. However, no specific training relating to self-harm is completed. Therefore, staff may not be fully aware of how to respond to some young people's behaviours.

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 differences 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: 1271607

Registered provider: Options Autism (4) Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Mark Williams

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Andrew Hewston, social care inspector

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