

2632330

Registered provider: Positive Steps Specialist Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to five children with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and/or sensory impairment.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living at the home.

The manager is suitably qualified and has been registered with Ofsted since April 2024.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 February 2025

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: 11 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/07/2023	Full	Good
05/12/2022	Full	Good
14/12/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff are warm and caring to the children. Professionals are positive about the care that staff provide children. Staff say that they feel well supported.

Children benefit from a well-maintained home. Children's bedrooms are decorated to reflect their tastes and interests. One child does not like curtains. Staff have worked with the child to install privacy film and have ordered 'curtains' that can be temporarily put in place when the child is changing. This helps the child to retain a sense of dignity, while also respecting their sensory likes and dislikes.

Children make good progress and enjoy a sense of belonging and stability. One child's social worker said they were 'safer since they've lived at the home. [Name of child] is feeling the best they have felt in a long time; they are stable now. This is the longest that they have lived anywhere, and they have stability.'

Children and staff have fun together outside of the home. One child's social worker commented that one of the biggest areas of progress for their child was the time they are enjoying in the community. They said, 'Before, they never went out, but now they have enjoyed trips to the shops and to see Santa.'

Children are supported and prepared well to access healthcare. Staff speak with the children in advance of their appointment.

Children are supported to travel to school in a manner that lessens their anxiety and helps them to attend full time. One child's sixth-form tutor commented on how beneficial staff's expertise had been in helping them to understand the child's communication needs. She said that this had helped the school to understand the child so they could achieve and enjoy their school experience.

Children's moves into the home are carefully considered and well managed. The manager and staff work with social workers and families to phase children's moves in line with their specific needs. This reduces the stress children feel and helps them feel some control. For example, one child's mother was supported to paint their child's room. The child's social worker said that this was fundamental in helping the child to feel a sense of continuity with their family, which reassured and comforted them. Another child is due to move out of the home. The child has been supported to gradually visit their new home.

Staff work hard to ensure that children can spend meaningful time with their families. Children's parents are appreciative of this effort by staff to build and maintain their family relationships. One child's parent said, 'I almost want to cry as I'm so happy with their care. I feel so reassured by this. I know [name of child] is safe and cared for and is where they need to be to thrive.'

Staff lock the doors to the laundry, kitchen and linen cupboard routinely. Children's risk assessments evidence that this has previously been necessary and has been agreed with social workers. However, these restrictions are not kept under review to ensure they remain necessary and proportionate.

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

Staff know the children well. Children say they feel safe. Social workers agree that children are kept safe and are offered consistent care by the staff.

Children's risk assessments are updated and identify their specific triggers. As a result, staff work alongside children and understand children's behaviour as communication.

There have been instances where staff have had to hold or guide children this inspection year. However, the use of this is proportionate and brief, and there is clear management oversight. For example, following one recent incident, the manager completed a lessons learned evaluation with staff and made child-centred updates to the child's risk assessment.

No children have been missing from the home since the last inspection. Children are well prepared before they go out in the community. Staff make plans with them and agree strategies to keep them safe.

Children are informed of the complaints procedure in the children's guide when they move into the home. The children's guide is child centred and written using communication symbols. However, there is no internal process in place to enable the children to make a complaint or raise concerns anonymously or without approaching staff or the manager. In addition, none of the children have an advocate.

When allegations are made, the manager ensures that appropriate and immediate action is taken and referrals are made to the local authority designated officer. However, the quality of analysis in internal investigations is not consistent, and lessons learned have not been routinely implemented.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is a tenacious advocate for the children. She has high standards for the quality of care that she expects staff and professionals to provide to the children. Staff consistently say that they are well supported by the registered manager. They enjoy working at the home.

The manager is relatively new to her role. The senior leadership team has provided her with appropriate support. This has helped the new manager to develop in her role. She has good oversight and has started to implement new systems in the home

to enable improvements to take place. These are new and it is too early to assess their effectiveness.

The manager and staff have good relationships with professionals. Social workers, education professionals and clinical staff consistently praise their communication and commitment to the children. One social worker said, 'I rate [name of manager]. I think she is building a really good-quality home. Her management style has developed, and she is more focused and directive in the right way to staff. She is creating a lovely, safe environment.'

Staff speak of children with warmth and compassion. When they spend time together in the home, staff are attuned to children's needs and are playful. However, this time is not consistently well recorded. Records are handwritten and hard to read. The language used is difficult for the children to understand. Consequently, the records are not helpful for children to reflect on or understand their time in their home.

Staff receive supervisions. However, this is not regular for some staff. In addition, supervisions do not consistently provide staff with the opportunity to reflect on their practice.

Six staff are outside of timescales for attaining their level 3 qualification. The manager and senior leadership team have taken action. They are now monitoring this aspect more vigorously.

The manager has met all four requirements and the one recommendation from the previous inspection.

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 recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform.</p> <p>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—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 3 Diploma”); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>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; or</p> <p>in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))</p>	<p>28 June 2025</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that records relating to children are written in child-friendly language and that language used to describe children is appropriate. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

- The registered person should ensure that children are actively encouraged to read their records and to add further information to them. They should be regularly reminded of their rights to see information kept about them and be given information about how they might be supported to access their records in later life. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.6)
- The registered person should ensure that, just as in a family home, children are able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that staff encourage children to share any concerns about their care or other matters as soon as they arise. Children must be able to take up issues or make a complaint with support and without any fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. Children must be aware of this procedure and be reminded of it as necessary. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.13)
- The registered person should ensure that staff supervision enables staff to reflect and act on how their own feelings and behaviour may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.15)
- The registered person should ensure that they are skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: 2632330

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Positive Steps Specialist Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: 2 Trust Court, Vision Park, Chivers Way, Histon, Cambridgeshire CB24 9PW

Responsible individual: Gary Shorter

Registered manager: Alice Parker

Inspector

Majella Russell, Social Care Inspector

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