

# 1251364

Registered provider: Area Camden Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is a privately operated children's home which is registered to care for up to six children, irrespective of gender, who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 18 to 19 December 2018

**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:** 10 October 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 10/10/2017      | 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>(a) that staff—</p> <p>(v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(v))</p> <p>In particular, that staff understand action to take in the event of a child making an allegation against a senior member of the staff team.</p>                                                                                                                                           | 01/04/2019 |
| <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—</p> <p>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—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(h))</p> <p>In particular, that the registered person ensures that staff's recording of information is of a high standard. This relates to risk assessments, incident reports, children's independence booklets and low-level complaints.</p> | 01/04/2019 |
| <p>Statement of Purpose</p> <p>The registered person must—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 01/02/2019 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>(a) keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>(b) notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, to consider the reference made to pedagogy and information about the frequency of staff supervision.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |            |
| <p>The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>develop positive relationships with them;</p> <p>engage with them; and</p> <p>take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that each child—</p> <p>has access to the home's children's guide, and the home's complaints procedure, when the child's placement in the home is agreed and throughout the child's stay in the home;</p> <p>keep the children's guide and the home's complaints procedure under review and seek children's comments before revising either document. Regulation (7)(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(b)(c))</p> | 01/04/2019 |
| <p><b>Fitness of workers</b></p> <p>The registered person may permit an individual to start work at the home despite the fact that the requirement in paragraph (3)(d) has not been met if—</p> <p>(b) full and satisfactory information in respect of the individual has been obtained in relation to the matters in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 2. (Regulation 32(7)(b))</p> <p>In particular, to ensure that staff files contain recent staff photographs, evidence of a current DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check when staff are appointed to post, and that there are no unexplained gaps in staff's employment histories.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                   | 01/04/2019 |

## Recommendations

- Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education, and be engaged in suitable structured activities. If no education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge them to meet the child's needs under regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met) ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 5.15, page 28)

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children make good progress and have a range of positive experiences while living in this home. They receive individualised care which meets their identified needs. This is in accordance with placing authorities' care plans. A social worker said, 'The staff have perseverance. They keep trying with X [child], they really do care about her.' A child said of the home, 'Overall, I give it eight out of ten!'

Children are warmly welcomed into the home. Staff routinely facilitate pre-placement visits, so that children can meet with staff and see where they will be living before the placement begins. This allows children the opportunity to ask questions directly, which helps to allay any fears they may have. Unplanned endings rarely happen, but when they do occur, decisions are made in the best interests of the children.

Children participate in day-to-day decisions about their lives. They help to decide on a range of leisure activities, including holidays abroad. Staff cook meals that children have chosen. Children regularly engage in residents' meetings and use this forum to share their views and opinions. They also participate in consultation exercises, which helps to shape the running of the home.

Children share positive relationships with staff. Team members equally enjoy working with children. One staff member said, 'I love it here. It's like my family. We need to make the children's lives as normal as possible – I'm their aunty.'

Children generally live healthy lives with most children taking responsibility for their healthcare. However, some children do not take on this responsibility. Staff continue to work with these children to help them to readdress their approach to healthcare issues. Children have access to specialist healthcare services, such as child and adolescent mental health services and sexual health clinics. They enjoy healthy, nutritious diets and participate in meal planning to ensure that meals are to their liking.

Some children engage in their education and their learning outcomes are positive.

However, this is not the case for all children. When children are awaiting school enrolment, the staff do not proactively engage them in educational activities. This does not support children in achieving their learning outcomes.

Children participate in the home's independence programme. This helps children to improve their practical living skills and prepares them for adulthood. Tasks include preparing meals, budgeting and attending to their laundry. Children have semi-independence booklets which track their progress. The booklet includes an assessment of the tasks that children can complete as well as those skills that they need to develop. However, staff need to ensure that all of the children's booklets are produced when requested. One child's semi-independence booklet was missing at the time of the inspection.

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

Children feel safe at the home and with the staff team. Staff protect them from harm, abuse and bullying. The staff team has access to comprehensive child protection procedures and safeguarding features strongly in staff training and induction.

Bullying does not happen at the home. Children and staff understand the risks posed to children by their use of the internet. Appropriate safeguards are in place, which encourages internet safety. These safeguards include training for children and the staff team.

Not all children understand how to make complaints. Some indicated that they are unclear about the home's complaints procedures. The information in the children's guide is vague and is not explicit about who children can contact if they want to make a complaint. The home has received no complaints and managers do not log low-level 'grumbles' made by children. Records do not evidence that children are offered the opportunity to make complaints if they wish to do so.

Children benefit from the clear boundaries set by staff; their supervision and vigilance of children are effective. As a result, few critical incidents occur in the home. Staff promote the children's positive behaviour and manage emerging conflicts sensitively. When the children's behaviour is challenging, staff manage these situations well. No child has been restrained by staff.

Some children have a prolific history of being absent or going missing from care, and some continue to do this at the home. For others, however, the frequency of missing episodes from the home is reducing. Staff take appropriate action when children are missing or absent, and records of these instances are clear.

Staff work effectively with the police, the local authority and other safeguarding professionals to encourage the children's safe return home. This helps to curb risk-taking behaviour. A social worker said of a child in placement, 'Her outcomes here are good. There's been no assault, minimal criminal damage and reduced episodes of missing, by

miles.'

There are good protocols in place for protecting those children who are suspected to be at risk of child sexual abuse. No child is involved in criminal exploitation. Risk assessments identify known and potential risks. This helps to reduce risk-taking behaviour. However, some documented levels of risk are inaccurate, and require review.

There have been no allegations made against the staff team. Staff receive training in the management of allegations. However, some staff do not demonstrate good knowledge of the action to be taken in the event that a child makes an allegation against another member of the team. This is not in the children's best interests.

The home's premises are maintained, decorated and furnished extremely well. Children enjoy and respect their surroundings. The building is safe and secure and there are no health and safety concerns.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The home's manager is skilled and experienced in leading a staff team that is dedicated to providing good-quality care for children. The manager is in the process of being registered with Ofsted. She has clear ambitions for the improvement of the home.

Leaders and managers ensure that the home's care planning processes are effective. They work collaboratively with placing authorities to ensure that the children's needs are well met. The staff's communication with other professionals is effective. A social worker said, 'The leadership here is good. X [current manager] knows her staff well, there's a good skill mix, and staff present well in meetings. There's good communication with staff – they know what's going on.'

The home's monitoring systems are good. However, some records require regular auditing to ensure that they are accurate and appropriately detailed. These include risk assessments, incident reports, staff recruitment records and monthly progress reports. The home's statement of purpose and the children's guide both require revision.

The home employs a sufficient number of staff to meet the children's needs. Staff have access to training opportunities that help them to develop the skills they need to care for vulnerable children. New members of the team undergo an induction and the support of staff is good. Staff receive regular supervision and managers conduct staff appraisals annually. This is to ensure that the staff's performance and development are carefully monitored, and results in them providing high-quality care.

The home is properly staffed and resourced. However, the vetting and recruitment of new staff requires improvement. In particular, applicants need to explain any gaps in their employment history; staff photographs need to be kept on file; and DBS checks need to be current at the point of staff appointments.

The provider is financially viable and staff use resources creatively to ensure that the children have positive and unique experiences. Shortfalls identified in the leadership and management of the home do not adversely impact upon the children's progress. Leaders, managers and staff ensure that the protection of the children's and their well-being is central to their work with children.

## **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:** 1251364

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

**Registered provider:** Area Camden Ltd

**Registered provider address:** 1 Turnpike Lane, London, Middlesex N8 0EP

**Responsible individual:** Nuala Harrington

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Sandra Jacobs-Walls: social care inspector

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