

1266835

Registered provider: Action for Children

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides short breaks for children aged between eight and 18 who may have a learning disability and/or complex health needs.

The home provides care for up to five children at any given time. The home is owned and operated by a national organisation.

The manager successfully registered with Ofsted in April 2019.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 August 2019

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 **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 1 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/05/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be 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
6: The quality and purpose of care standard The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(iv)) In particular, ensure that one child's care plan clearly identifies the support he may require to access an upstairs bedroom and, if needed, complete an associated risk assessment in relation to this.	31/08/2019
13: The leadership and management standard 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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	30/11/2019

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(2)(h))	
35: Behaviour management policies and records The registered person must ensure that— within 5 days of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure (Regulation 35 (3)(c))	31/08/2019

Recommendations

- Ensure that staff work in partnership with relevant people as appropriate to ensure that each child is provided with the support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning and daily care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6). In particular, ensure that communication books are available for all families to further enhance communication.
- Ensure that the registered person makes best use of the information from internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24). In particular, ensure that the actions identified to improve the quality of care are clear and concise, identify the priorities and have target dates.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are happy when they stay at this short-break service. They receive good-quality care and support from staff who develop positive, warm and nurturing relationships with them. Children say that they love to come and stay here. One child gave '100 out of 10' for how much he enjoys staying at the home, and another child said how much fun he has when he visits.

Some staff have worked at the home for several years and know the children and their families well. At this inspection, the inspector observed staff supporting children in a sensitive and caring manner. For example, one child has specific sensory needs and staff assisted him by exploring his environment with smells, tastes and textures. Parents speak of the good care and support that their children receive.

Some children have specific communication needs. Staff use alternative methods of communication with children effectively. Children have a good awareness and understanding of the use of photographs and signs in the home. These inform them of the planned day-to-day activities and the staff who will be supporting them.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities, both in the home and in the local community. Children say that they love the activities and that they have fun. At the time of this inspection, children chose to go to the cinema and were very excited about this. They chose the film that they wanted to see. When they returned, they told the inspector how much they enjoyed the film, and the popcorn.

Mealtimes are a family-style occasion. Staff ensure that children are involved in menu planning and are given choices in food and drinks. In addition, children are encouraged to try new foods. Children say that they enjoy the meals that are provided. Children are encouraged to cook and prepare meals, and to clear the table after a meal. This develops children's independence. At the time of the inspection, a child told the inspector that he made a sandwich for lunch for the first time. He was very proud of this.

Children's education and health needs remain the responsibility of parents. However, records kept in the home demonstrate that children are doing well in relation to their education. Staff regularly attend children's education reviews. This ensures good partnership working. Staff take effective action when children are feeling unwell and require medical intervention. Staff ensure that parents are alerted to any concerns in relation to children's health needs.

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

The arrangements to safeguard children are good. Leaders and managers respond effectively to safeguarding concerns. Staff have a thorough understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and receive regular safeguarding training. Children are

helped to stay safe, and a social worker and parents say that they have no concerns about children's safety.

Staff are provided with behaviour support plans that guide them well in how to support children in managing their emotions and feelings. Staff say that these are helpful documents because they are regularly reviewed and updated to take account of children's current needs and behaviours.

Restraint is rarely used. If used, this is as a last resort to keep children and others safe. The registered manager reviews these incidents to look for triggers and trends, and to determine the appropriateness of the restraint. However, staff have not held discussions with a child to seek his views following a recent intervention.

Due to the children's complex support needs, some children need to be monitored during the night. Leaders and managers regularly review this practice with parents and social workers to ensure that this practice is needed.

Leaders and managers ensure that there is an effective recruitment and selection process that safeguards children.

Children stay in a home that is safe and well maintained.

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

Since the last inspection, the manager has successfully registered with Ofsted.

Leadership and management require improvement because this inspection has identified shortfalls in relation to the management oversight of some records. These include records relating to incidents, children's records and staff training records.

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has completed a detailed review of the quality of care. However, the action points to further improve are not clear and specific. In addition, senior managers have recently undertaken an internal management review of the home. The audit identified a number of shortfalls in the management oversight of the home. In response to this, senior managers developed an action plan to address these shortfalls. Leaders and managers have been open and transparent and have shared the most recently updated plan with Ofsted. Some improvements have been made, but these need to further imbed in practice.

Regular visits by the independent visitor continue to take place. The registered manager responds effectively to recommendations made in the independent visitor's report. In addition, the responsible individual comments on the report. This ensures that he is aware of the outcome of these visits and takes the required action.

Generally, records in the home are well written. However, some records are not always clear and concise. For example, some associated records in relation to incidents do not provide an accurate picture of each event. In addition, not all families have

communication books to share information between the child's home, school and the short-break service. This does not always ensure effective communication.

Staff are provided with detailed support plans that guide staff in how to meet the needs of the children. These are completed with parents and are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the children's needs. However, for one child his plan does not identify the support he may need in relation to accessing an upstairs bedroom. This does not ensure that staff are clear regarding any support he may require, and any associated risks.

Staff receive mandatory training and specific training to meet the needs of the children. However, the current training record has not been kept under review and regularly updated.

Children stay in a homely environment. Since the last inspection, staff and a senior manager have completed a 'walkabout' of the home and identified where further improvements can be made. As a result of this, a detailed and realistic action plan has been developed. Senior managers say that there is a commitment to continue to make improvements in the home.

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: 1266835

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Action for Children, 3 The Boulevard Ascot Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 8AG

Responsible individual: Lee Furniss

Registered manager: Gregory Bennett

Inspector

David Kidner, social care inspector

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