

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 years 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. At the time of this inspection, two children were visiting the home for short breaks.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2021.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 July 2023

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: 15 June 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/06/2022	Full	Good
21/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/12/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/02/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children like visiting this home for short breaks. During their stay, staff provide children with good-quality care and ensure that they have fun. Children's daily diaries tell the story of the child's stay and their positive experiences in the home.

Staff fully involve children in making choices about their stay. 'Very Important Person' meetings are held with children at the beginning of their stay. This time is given to children to enable them to choose their snacks, what meals they want, and what they want to do that evening. In addition, children have been looking ahead to what they want to do in the summer holidays. This is an effective and meaningful consultation forum.

Staff have built very good relationships with children and their families. Staff know children's needs and meet them with dignity and respect. Staff understand the children's communication needs and allow children time to express themselves.

Children's plans are of good quality and provide clear guidance for staff on how to care for each child. These plans also document the child's progress towards meeting their individual goals. However, currently, most of these plans are written in the first person but it is not clear that children have been involved in their writing.

Medication and children's health needs are managed appropriately. Medication records are clear and comprehensive. When a medication error occurs, swift action is taken to ensure that the child's well-being is not compromised and to prevent reoccurrence. Healthcare plans provide clear guidance for staff and include photographs and flow charts of complex procedures. Some children need visual monitors at night due to their health needs. The need for these is frequently reviewed with parents and health professionals. Such a review has led to one child no longer needing the monitor. Accidents are appropriately managed, but staff do not consistently use body maps to record marks and/or injuries.

The home is furnished and equipped to a good standard. Staff ensure that children, including those who use wheelchairs, have access to all parts of the home. One bedroom has two beds in it despite only one bed being in use. This limits the amount of available space for the child using the room. It is positive to see so many photos displayed of children having fun in the home.

Parents and a social worker who contributed to this inspection stated that children are well cared for and that they have all made significant progress from their starting points.

How well children are helped and protected judgement: good

Children are safe at the home. Staff understand the additional vulnerabilities of disabled children, and demonstrate a good understanding of their role in keeping children safe. When safeguarding events occur, appropriate action is taken in a timely manner. Currently, information on safeguarding events is stored in three different formats. In reviewing all of these records, they evidence appropriate actions being taken to safeguard children. However, this system does not provide ease of access, and makes monitoring the events more challenging.

Behaviour is well managed because of in-depth knowledge the staff have of the children's needs. Staff quickly pick up on small changes in the children's body language and verbal communication and respond to these swiftly, effectively supporting the child to feel safe. Generally, records of incidents provide an appropriate picture of the event. However, when physical intervention is used, staff do not record the duration of each intervention and the overall duration of the incident. In addition, meaningful conversations with the children involved are not consistently carried out by staff who were not involved in the event.

Staff manage risk appropriately. Good-quality risk assessments support this work as they provide clear guidance for staff on how to mitigate and reduce levels of risk.

Since the previous inspection, there have been no events where children have been missing from the home. However, the missing-from-home policy, which is written by the organisation's central office, needs review.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

An experienced and qualified manager has been registered with Ofsted since in post since April 2021. They have a good overview of the home, its strengths and areas for development. They have also ensured that the previous requirement and recommendation have been met. Staff have confidence in the manager and see them as a supportive role model. This ethos of support is reflected in the home's culture. Staff report that they feel safe working here. For example, if they do not feel confident to undertake a task, they know that the manager will support them. There is also a culture of partnership working with parents and other professionals.

Staffing levels are appropriate to meet the needs of the children. When required, waking night staff are in place to support children's needs overnight.

Staff are managed effectively by a core team of senior staff. Senior managers have sought to strengthen senior staffing stability by employing two additional team leaders. This management team provides regular effective supervision to staff. Staff have access to the right training to help them to support children effectively.

Leaders typically challenge other services when they are not effective or not meeting their duty of care. However, for one child who is not in education, there is limited evidence to show what action has been taken to address this.

Notifications are being made to Ofsted as required, with one exception when the home had to close due to a fault with the fire alarm. The manager felt that this was an unsafe situation and acted appropriately, but did not inform Ofsted of this decision.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they consistently use regulation 5 when they have concerns regarding placing authorities' lack of action to support a child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.3)
- The registered person should review having two beds in one of the bedrooms as this reduces the space in this room for the child to use. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that staff consistently use body maps to record any injuries or marks on a child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.10)
- The registered person should ensure that the organisation's missing-from-home policy is reviewed and amended as need by the organisation's central office. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)
- The registered manager should ensure that where restraint is used, staff record the duration of each hold used. In addition, meaningful conversation with children should be undertaken by staff who were not involved in the incident. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person should review the recording of safeguarding events to ensure that they are easy to access and aid the manager in effectively monitoring these events. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.23)
- The registered person should ensure that information in the children's records and plans that are written using first-person narrative is only used when the information comes from the child. All information in children's records should be recorded in a way that is helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- The registered person should ensure that Ofsted is notified of all events that they deem as serious, especially those that lead to the home being closed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.9)

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: 1266835

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Action For Children

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

Responsible individual: Claire Cahill

Registered manager: Claire Baylis

Inspectors

Wendy Anderson, Social Care Inspector
Joy Howick, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023