

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 between eight and 18 years of age 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.
- This is the first full inspection of this short-break service since its re-registration in October 2017. The service is now owned and managed by Action for Children, a national organisation. The registered manager resigned and left her post on 1 May 2018. An interim manager, who is not registered with Ofsted, is in post. A senior manager confirmed that interviews are scheduled in May 2018 to appoint a permanent manager.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 May 2018

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: This is the first inspection since the home registered

Overall judgement at last inspection: This is the first inspection since the home registered

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date

N/A

Inspection type

Inspection judgement

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
12. The protection of children standard The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b)) In particular, ensure that detailed records are maintained to record the actions that leaders and managers have taken when there are unknown causes of bruises to children This includes action taken to inform the appropriate agencies and authorities.	8/06/2018
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (2)(a)(d)) In particular, regularly review staffing levels to ensure that there are sufficient staff on duty at all times to meet the needs of the children.	30/06/2018
13. The leadership and management standard	8/06/2018

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 91) requires the registered person to— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (2)(f)) In particular, leaders and managers should ensure that there is close scrutiny and evaluation of incident records, restraint records, body maps, and records relating to fire checks. In addition, ensure that the record that is used to record staff training is kept up to date.	
24. Monitoring and surveillance The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, continue to consult with parents and carers and social workers to ensure that the use of a visual monitoring device is based on the child's assessed need, detailed in the child's placement plan, and is regularly reviewed.	31/08/2018
33. Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that all employees—	30/06/2018

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) In particular, ensure that staff receive regular supervision in line with the home's statement of purpose, and ensure that the records relating to these supervision sessions record reflective practice.	
35. Behaviour management policies and records The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person')— has spoken to the user about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i))	08/06/2018
44. Independent person: visits and reports The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. 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 (1)(2)(a)) In particular, seek the views of children, their parents and relatives and include their comments in the reports.	30/06/2018

Recommendations

- 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)
- Ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside of the home (where appropriate) and are encouraged to participate in those activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5) In particular, consider ways in which these activities can be captured, such as photographic evidence that can be shared with children and their parents.

Inspection judgements

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

Children thoroughly enjoy staying at this short-break service and are happy and excited to visit. Staff develop positive and trusted relationships with children, and have a good understanding of children's individual needs, and their likes and preferences.

Children said that they love the activities in both the home and the wider community, and parents confirm this. Staff support children to attend a variety of local clubs, which are also attended by local children. However, staff do not capture these experiences in a way that children can create memories which they can take home and share with their parents and families.

Staff help the children to make choices in activities, meals, snacks and drinks. Wherever possible, this includes the choice of bedroom they wish to sleep in when they come to stay. Children say they sleep well and like how the bedrooms are decorated.

Staff encourage children to develop their independent skills. They are encouraged to prepare and cook meals and to lay the table. One parent said, 'My son makes his own sandwiches and is supported and encouraged to develop his personal care skills.'

Leaders and managers ensure that children who are new to the home are made to feel welcome. A child said, 'I visited before I came to stay; it was fun, I love it here.'

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

Staff complete body maps when they observe children to have 'bumps and bruises'. However, leaders and managers have failed to review and evaluate the information recorded in all body maps and act on potential concerns raised by staff. Some concerns have not been reported to social workers in the first instance. A senior manager took effective action at the time of this inspection to address these concerns.

Due to the children's complex support needs, some children need to be monitored during the night. However, leaders and managers have not ensured that all social workers have authorised their agreement to this monitoring, and that the use of the monitoring device is based on the child's assessed need and is detailed in their placement plan. In addition, this practice has not been regularly reviewed to ensure that the use of the monitoring device is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy.

Staff use de-escalation skills effectively to help children to manage their emotions and feelings. Restraint is used as a last resort to keep children safe. Records in relation to the use of restraint are reviewed by managers for their appropriateness and effectiveness. However, managers have not recorded that staff who took part in the restraint have been spoken with about what happened. In addition, the recording of one restraint is poor, and in parts illegible. The manager had noted this weakness and made

a record on the report.

The designated officer confirms that there have not been any referrals made to them since the home was re-registered. Staff receive safeguarding training, and demonstrated a good awareness of safeguarding principles and processes.

Children are safeguarded by an effective recruitment and selection process. In addition, one child sits on the interview panel. This is a good example of how children are involved in the development of the service. Children say that they feel safe when they stay at the home. They say that the staff make them feel safe. Parents echo this too.

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

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that there are effective processes to closely monitor and evaluate a range of records. This includes records relating to restraint, behavioural incidents, body maps, fire checks and the staff training record. In addition, the new systems and processes that have been introduced since re-registration are not yet embedded into practice.

Staffing levels require regular review to ensure that there are sufficient staff on duty at all times to meet the needs of the children. At the time of this inspection, three members of staff were on duty to support five children. It was the first shift for one staff member. In addition, some staff told the inspector that more individualised activities could take place if there were higher staffing levels.

Staff are not receiving regular supervision. In addition, supervision records do not always record that staff reflect on their practice.

Staff receive a wide range of training to ensure that they can meet the needs of the children. This includes specific safeguarding training in relation to children who have disabilities, and meeting the children's health needs.

Regular visits by the independent visitor take place. Although the reports make recommendations to improve, they do not regularly contain the views of the children, their parents or relatives. Leaders and managers have identified this to be a shortfall in their expectations.

Leaders and managers have completed a detailed review of the quality of care provided. They have identified the strengths and weaknesses of the service and developed an action plan to further improve.

Leaders and managers take effective action when concerns are raised in relation to staff practice.

Placement plans provide staff with guidance on how to meet children's individual needs. The format of placement plans is under review and they are currently being developed in an electronic format.

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: Action for Children

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

Responsible individual: Kate Isham

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

David Kidner, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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