

1266835

Registered provider: Action For Children

Interim 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 date: 11 February 2020

Date of last inspection: 5 August 2019

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection.
At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.

This short-break service has been judged as declined in effectiveness. This is because safeguarding arrangements are weak, and the registered manager's oversight and monitoring are poor.

Leaders and managers did not follow safeguarding procedures when a safeguarding concern was reported to them. They did not notify Ofsted of the concern and undertook an internal investigation prior to referring the concern to the designated officer. In addition, leaders and managers have not ensured that recommendations made following the investigation are all completed. This has the potential to compromise children's safety and well-being.

Leaders and managers have not provided staff with all the information and guidance they need to support the children who stay for a short break. Important documents, that include placement plans, behaviour support plans and behavioural risk assessments for children who exhibit high-risk behaviours, are either not fully completed or not in place. In addition, signatures and dates for these documents are missing. This means that staff are not provided with clear direction about how to identify, manage and mitigate these behaviours and associated risks.

Leaders and managers have not assessed and reviewed the need for and continued use of restrictive and intrusive practices. These include, for one child, the use of a restricted bed and the continual use of monitoring devices. This does not promote children's privacy or liberty.

Children's opportunity to enjoy activities in the community is limited. The lack of access to a vehicle means that the home is reliant on booking a local taxi firm to take children on activities. As a result, children's social needs and personal interests and hobbies are not promoted or broadened.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that recruitment checks are robust enough. This inspection highlighted gaps in the verification of employment history and references.

The management of fire safety is poor. Leaders and managers have not ensured that fire drills are undertaken regularly or made sure that all the children have participated in a fire evacuation. Personal evacuation plans are in place for all children. However, these plans lack critical information. For example, they do not detail how children will respond when the alarms are activated, nor do they comprehensively detail how staff should protect children in the event of a fire.

Leaders and managers have not taken appropriate action to improve the services provided to children, despite weaknesses being routinely brought to their attention by the independent visitor. The registered manager's monitoring of the home is weak and lacks evaluation. He has not taken enough action to improve incomplete and poorly maintained records. In addition, he has not ensured that all staff are up to date with basic mandatory or specialist training. This limits staff ability to understand and respond to children's current and changing needs.

The registered manager is eager to improve the quality of care provided within the home. The staff's interaction with children was observed to be warm, caring and sensitive.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/08/2019	Full	Good
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 and uses 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 to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; and that the care is delivered by a person who— has the experience, knowledge and skills to deliver that care; and is under the supervision of a person who is appropriately skilled and qualified to supervise that care. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(vii)(3)(c)(I)(ii)) In particular, ensure that children have reliable access to a car when required and that staff have the necessary mandatory and specialist training for their role.	27/03/2020
9: The enjoyment and achievement standard The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. (Regulation 9 (1)) In particular, ensure that the children are regularly provided with a variety of activities within the community.	27/03/2020

11: The positive relationships standard The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on an understanding about acceptable behaviour. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 11 (1)(b)(2)(a)(i)) This is with reference to ensuring that placement plans, behaviour support plans, risk assessments and personal evacuation plans have clear strategies in place to minimise the risks and help children.	27/03/2020
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 promotes children's welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (a)(b)(2)(d)(h)) In particular, ensure that the manager has effective oversight of all incidents and paperwork within the home to make improvements.	27/03/2020
21: Privacy and access The registered person must ensure that any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises is kept under review and, if necessary, revised. (Regulation 21 (c)(iii))	27/03/2020

The manager must ensure that the continued use of a restricted bed and monitoring devices is necessary for the safety of the children, that the continued use of these restrictive practices is included within a risk management plan and is regularly reviewed by all necessary parties.	
32: Fitness of workers The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(3)(d))	27/03/2020
25: Fire precautions If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b))	
40: Notification of a serious event The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))	27/03/2020

Information about this inspection

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full 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: 3 The Boulevard Ascot Road, Watford,
Hertfordshire WD18 8AG

Responsible individual: Lee Furniss

Registered manager: Gregory Bennett

Inspector

Sharron Escott, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
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