

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 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.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2019.

Inspection date: 21 March 2022

Date of last inspection: 15 December 2021

Judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be 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 requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judged that it has improved effectiveness.

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have taken effective action to address the shortfalls. Six of the seven requirements are met, and one recommendation is also met. One requirement has been restated as there has not yet been sufficient progress. One recommendation is repeated because further recruitment has not yet happened.

The home continues to offer children a homely and welcoming environment in which to enjoy their short breaks. The manager seeks the children's views to ensure they feel safe and to see what they would like to change in the home.

Staff clearly record incidents that happen within the home. Their reflection and learning helps to inform the manager's overview. The manager implements actions identified to improve experiences for children. Staff take action to safeguard children's welfare and keep parents informed.

Team meetings take place regularly. They explore important issues within the home, including changes to children's plans or stays. Staff receive regular supervision. The quality of the records of supervision has improved. Records of discussions demonstrate reflective supervision contributing to professional development. However, agency staff do not receive supervision. Team meetings and supervision records reflect discussions about safeguarding.

Care plans contain the information needed to care for children. Behaviour plans now contain more detail about distraction techniques to use with children. The use of specific equipment for support and monitoring is now clearly documented. Documents clearly state who has authorised them and when.

Staffing remains a challenge for leaders and managers. As such, the manager continues to frequently work on shift. This reduces the time spent on management tasks and developing the home. In response to the staffing difficulties, the home's operating hours have been reduced. This provides continuity for children attending and means that stays do not get cancelled. The manager employs agency staff but has not ensured suitability checks are completed in line with regulatory requirements.

The independent person is now seeking views from parents and professionals.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/12/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/02/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
05/08/2019	Full	Good
01/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)) In particular, the manager should ensure that the staffing of the home is sufficient to allow them to undertake the tasks associated with their role and to have oversight of the home. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	29 April 2022

The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that they satisfy themselves that the required checks have been completed for agency members of staff and record this.	15 April 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that regular agency staff receive practice-related supervision.	29 April 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should seek references from all the applicants' social care employers. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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, WD18 8AG

Responsible individual: Claire Cahill

Registered manager: Claire Baylis

Inspector

Clare Nixon, Social Care Inspector

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