

1272461

Registered provider: Area Camden Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in February 2018. The new manager has submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home.

The inspectors were aware during this inspection that a serious child protection allegations were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the home in response to the allegations were considered (where appropriate) alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform the inspectors' judgements.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 2 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A compliance notice under regulation 12, the protection of children standard, of the Children's Homes Regulations (England) 2015 was issued on 1 December 2023. This compliance notice was issued as a result of an assurance inspection undertaken on 27 November 2023 in response to an allegation that a serious incident had occurred at the home. The assurance inspection identified widespread concerns in relation to the care and protection of children.

A monitoring visit was undertaken to monitor the home's progress on 5 January 2024. The provider had addressed the concerns raised and met the compliance notice. No further action was required following the monitoring visit.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/08/2023	Full	Outstanding
15/02/2023	Full	Good
02/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
28/01/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress from their starting points living in this home. They are helped to develop important life skills and prepare for their futures. Children have clear goals and incentives to help them achieve their goals. Children are able to talk about what they want to achieve and the progress they are making, for example maintaining a clean bedroom.

Children develop trusting relationships with staff. They are encouraged to make decisions about their lives through regular consultations, individual sessions and house meetings. However, children's care plans do not demonstrate this well. Children say that they have good relationships with staff and feel listened to. This helps children to settle and develop a sense of belonging in the home.

Children enjoy a range of activities that are specific to their interests and talents. This gives children structured time at home and opportunities to have new experiences in the community. Some children went on holiday last summer to a seaside resort.

Children's health needs are well understood, and their needs are met. Staff work closely with health agencies to ensure that children receive the appropriate support. As a result, children are enabled to engage with their healthcare plans and make positive progress.

The home's physical environment is maintained to a high standard and is safe for children. The home is warm and welcoming and has a family atmosphere. Children are supported to decorate their bedrooms. This helps children to feel comfortable in their home.

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

Children said that they feel safe in the home. They can identify a trusted person to talk to if they have concerns. The warmth and confidence of the staff help children to feel safe and secure and that they can talk to staff about things that worry them.

Children's known and potential risks are well understood by staff. Staff are proactive and curious about children's changing behaviours and work with other professionals to keep children safe. Safeguarding practice could be further strengthened by ensuring that all risk assessments for children show clear evaluation of the risks and identify the important information that staff need to know. Currently, risk assessments contain historical and out of date information that makes it difficult to see the current risks and actions required to reduce the risks.

Staff have a good understanding of whistle-blowing policies and procedures. Allegations or suspicions of harm are dealt with immediately and shared with the relevant agencies. Feedback from placing authorities is positive. This ensures that children are safe in their home.

Children receive a well-coordinated response when they are missing from home. The manager and staff work effectively with other professionals when children are missing from home. For some children, staff know them really well and take into account their histories, cognitive abilities and emotional abilities. However, for new children, this is not demonstrated well in their missing-from-home risk assessments. Independent return home interviews are regularly carried out; however, staff do not always receive feedback from the interviews. This is a missed opportunity to gather important information to manage and reduce risks.

Children receive appropriate help and support to manage their behaviour and feelings. Positive behaviour is encouraged with positive reinforcement and praise, which children respond to appropriately. Staff manage incidents well and help children to understand difficult emotions. There have been no incidents requiring physical intervention since the last inspection. This provides children with positive experiences of care in their home.

Leaders and managers have not always notified Ofsted of all significant incidents as required. For example, a serious incident involving the police and the fire brigade, though managed well, was not notified to Ofsted. This failure to report a serious incident compromises the regulator's external oversight of the home.

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

Leaders and managers have worked hard to address the concerns identified at the assurance inspection and have taken effective action to ensure that the concerns raised in the compliance notice were met.

Leaders and managers are aware of the impact that staff shortages are having on the children and the team. There is a high dependency on the use of agency staff. The manager has a plan in place to address this shortfall through continuous recruitment. The use of agency staff is carefully managed to ensure that staffing levels continue to meet the children's needs.

Staff undertake a range of online and face-to-face training. However, managers do not regularly monitor what courses staff have completed to assure themselves that they are suitably trained to support children and meet their needs.

The quality of staff supervision is variable. Staff benefit from regular supervision, covering a broad agenda. Some supervision sessions are reflective, offer staff support and guidance and consider the needs and progress of children. However, some supervision records do not demonstrate this well.

Children's case records do not always include important information. For example, details of children's most recent local authority review and education and healthcare plans are not on their files. Some of the children's plans that were completed in November 2023 were still in the manager's emails at the time of this inspection and not being used by staff. Managers have not escalated the concerns when information about children has not been provided promptly. This reduces the manager's and staff's understanding of the children's needs and progress.

Leaders and managers do not have effective monitoring systems in place to review the quality of care provided to children to identify key themes. Therefore, management oversight is compromised.

Leaders and managers work well with children's professional networks. Feedback from professionals is positive regarding the quality of care provided and communication from staff. This results in a shared approach in providing children with good-quality care and support.

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, The 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 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 staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that all children's missing-from-home risk assessments include information about all known risks and clear protocol for staff to follow. Additionally, leaders and managers must ensure that children's risk assessments are clear for staff.	31 May 2024
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.	31 May 2024

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; use monitoring and review systems to make improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that staff are suitably trained and that there are effective monitoring systems in place to review the quality of care provided.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	31 May 2024
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that all staff receive regular and effective supervision that considers children’s needs and progress.	31 May 2024
The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that children’s updated placing authority’s plans are on file.	28 June 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing or away from home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. The registered person should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

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: 1272461

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Area Camden Limited

Registered provider address: Malvern View, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior,
Bromsgrove B60 4AD

Responsible individual: Joanne Capuano

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Dorothy Thompstone, Social Care Inspector
Jenny-Ellen Scotland, Social Care Inspector

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