

1272461

Registered provider: Area Camden Limited

Assurance 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 in February 2018. There has been no registered manager since 3 September 2023. A new manager has been in post since 4 September 2023 and is due to submit an application to register with Ofsted.

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

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that an allegation has been made that a serious incident occurred at the setting since the last inspection which is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the incident were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

Inspection date: 27 November 2023

Date of last inspection: 2 August 2023

Judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We identified the following serious concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that there are always effective procedures to assess the suitability of staff to work with children. For example, when a concern was raised about a member during the recruitment process, leaders and managers did not sufficiently risk assess how that member of staff should be monitored, or how their suitability would be continually assessed and reviewed. Additionally, staff with no previous experience of working with children do not consistently receive additional support, supervision or management oversight of their practice. The lack of careful recruitment and monitoring of staff means that there is a risk that unsuitable people may work with children.

Leaders and managers do not always adequately assess the day-to-day staffing arrangements to ensure that there are always a sufficient number of suitably experienced staff on shift to meet the needs of the children in their care. Furthermore, leaders and managers do not evidence that they take into account the lone working policy when assessing if individual staff are suitable to work on their own with children, in order to make safe arrangements for staff and children. As a result, there are occasions when inexperienced staff who are new in the role are left to care for children on their own.

Children's care plans and risk assessments do not sufficiently consider children's individual needs and their previous experiences, to ensure that they receive the most appropriate support to meet their needs. Although children's needs, histories and behaviours are known, there is poor assessment and consideration of what this means for children.

As a result of this assurance inspection, Ofsted served a compliance notice in respect of regulation 12 (the protection of children). Ofsted will monitor the provider's compliance with the notice to determine if any further action is required.

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

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; 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)(a)(i)(b)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that the staffing arrangements at the home take into account staff's experience, skills and training. Leaders and managers must consider children's individual needs to ensure that they receive the most appropriate care.	31 December 2023
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. 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	31 December 2023

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)(a)(b)(c)(d))

In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that they review the suitability of staff to work with children and have effective recruitment procedures.

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission and how staff should support the child on return to the home. In particular, staff should follow the home's set protocols for individual children and work to this guidance when reporting children to the police and local authority as missing from home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 45, paragraph 9.28)
- The registered person should maintain good employment practice. They should ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises risks to them. In particular, when date-only references are provided, it is good practice to seek a third reference or character reference. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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

Leanne Grant, Social Care Inspector
Natalie Marshall, 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 children looked after, 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