

2726339

Registered provider: Action For Children

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company owns and manages this children's home. It provides care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2023

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 November 2025

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: 12 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/11/2024	Full	Good
05/03/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide children with a warm and welcoming home. The home is filled with photos of children enjoying new experiences and sharing special memories together. The children's bedrooms are personalised and reflect their individual personalities. As a result, children like living in the home and develop a sense of belonging.

Children are making good progress in all aspects of their lives. Staff ensure that children attend regular health appointments and use social stories to help children when they feel worried about their health. This approach alleviated one child's worries when they underwent surgery.

All children attend regular education and are making good progress. Following an exclusion for one child, the manager worked with the virtual school to provide the child with learning at home. An alternative placement was found, and the child is making better progress at this new setting.

Children benefit from stable and trusting relationships with those who care for them. This is because staff invest their time in building meaningful connections. Newer staff use the children's interests to build relationships with them. For example, one staff member learned about cars to initiate conversation and overcome any barriers to building the relationship.

Children are provided with a structured daily routine that includes varied activities and hobbies. Children regularly go to football and horse-riding lessons. This provides children with stability and promotes their overall well-being.

The manager acts on behalf of the child to escalate concerns when family time is not meeting the child's needs. Staff offer additional support to ensure that family time is regular and meaningful. Furthermore, two children spend time in the community with friends. This supports children to maintain positive connections with those who are important to them and helps them to develop social skills.

Children know how to make a complaint. However, the manager does not always respond in a way that is helpful for the children to understand. This does not reassure children that their concerns are being heard and addressed.

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

Children are safe living in the home. Staff work in partnership with other professionals to support interventions to reduce risk and worries for children's safety. One professional said, 'Staff are keen to learn how to keep children safe.' Staff highlight the implications of making safe choices through 'chit chat' conversations.

The manager takes effective action when a child makes an allegation against a staff member. They carry out an internal investigation and notify the relevant professionals. Staff support children sensitively throughout the investigation, and managers inform children of the outcome. This process strengthens children's safety.

Staff respond effectively when children go missing from home. Staff follow children to encourage them to return home and inform the relevant authorities and children's family members. Staff have discussions with children to understand why they have gone missing. They put in place safeguards to reduce the likelihood of children going missing from home. Consequently, children rarely go missing from home.

Leaders and managers complete checks on new staff before they work directly with children. This assures the manager that the staff working with the children are safe. Furthermore, this reduces the risk of harm to children.

Children's care plans and risk assessments are vague and not reflective of the children's current needs. As a result, the response of staff to children who are angry or upset is inconsistent. Consequently, some incidents are not managed consistently by staff, and, at times, children's behaviour escalates. This leaves children vulnerable and at risk of harm.

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

There are fundamental weaknesses in the oversight of leaders and managers that have affected the judgement in this area. The manager completes audits with the intention of identifying issues. However, the manager does not always recognise the shortfalls or take the necessary action to address them.

The home has access to a clinical psychologist, who carries out regular consultation sessions with staff. However, these sessions do not provide actions on how the model of care should be delivered. This means that helpful strategies are not included in children's plans and the impact of this learning on staff practice is limited.

Leaders and managers do not provide staff with the appropriate and focused training specific to children's needs. For example, staff do not have training on sexually harmful behaviour. In addition, the manager made several requests to leaders for training on the use of caring language and recording, but this was not secured. This means that staff do not develop these important skills, and this does not ensure safe and child-focused practice.

Leaders and managers deliver regular supervision. However, records are poor and do not evidence that staff practice is regularly reviewed. This hinders the manager from having oversight of staff development needs.

Staff say they feel supported and listened to by leaders and managers. Staff attend regular team meetings that offer support. These meetings provide staff a forum where

they can reflect together and identify areas that need to improve. The needs of children are central to these meetings, and this has had a positive impact on team cohesion and outcomes for children.

Leaders and managers have taken reasonable steps to recruit new staff when staff leave. The manager considers the individual skill set of people when interviewing potential new staff. This ensures that the staff recruited are suited to the role.

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 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 work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(c)(h))	31 January 2026
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; and 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))	31 January 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that a note of the content and/or outcomes of supervision sessions is kept, and, in particular, that this is an accurate record. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)
- The registered person should ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted on. This includes when children raise a complaint. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

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: 2726339

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Action For Children

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

Responsible individual: Barbara Bolam

Registered manager: Sheibon Howard

Inspector

Laura Roberts, Social Care Inspector (lead)
Amy Groom, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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