

2734923

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a charity and provides care for up to 4 children with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, sensory impairment and/or social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 4 children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2024.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 March 2026

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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 22 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/05/2024	Full	Good
03/01/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, 5 children have moved into the home, and 5 children have moved out. The inspector saw all 4 children living at the home at the time of this inspection.

Staff know the children extremely well. They have a thorough understanding of children's health needs and work closely with external agencies to support children with health concerns.

Staff understand the importance of education and encourage children to persevere. When children have faced challenges or setbacks in education, the staff proactively advocate for them. This means that children access education with support tailored to their needs.

Children participate in activities they enjoy. One child went on a trip to London to watch their favourite television show live. Other children have enjoyed holidays together. This has helped children regain a sense of childhood. Staff support children in developing age-appropriate independence skills. Positive relationships with the staff have contributed to the progress that the children have made.

Positive, warm and nurturing interactions were observed between the children and staff. The staff are responsive to children's individual needs. The children are very comfortable in the company of the staff and have built trusting relationships with them.

Children's bedrooms are personalised according to their tastes and preferences. The staff work hard to help children rebuild relationships with family and ensure that they maintain links with those who are important to them. This helps children with a sense of belonging and attachment.

Feedback from parents and professionals is extremely positive. One parent said that their child was very happy living at the home. Another parent said that staff go out of their way to support children. Staff overcome language barriers to support children and their families. Children's professionals acknowledge that this is due to the staff's innovative thinking and focus on the children's best interests.

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

Staff have a good understanding of the children and their risks and help them identify and understand them. Staff are assisted by detailed risk assessments and plans that cover a range of topics, including children's daily routines, managing behaviour and other risks.

The children's guide is child friendly and gives children a sense of what it is like living at the home. The guide contains information to help children understand who to speak to if they are worried or if they need support outside the home.

There has been one allegation against staff, which was investigated and managed appropriately. There have been no physical interventions or complaints from children. Parents and professionals are extremely positive about how their children are safeguarded and have not raised any concerns. One parent said their child was very safe and well looked after.

There have been incidents of children going missing from the home. When children go missing, staff are quick to respond. Partnership work with the police is effective, and staff actively ensure that the children return home as soon as possible. However, children are not offered return home interviews. This means that opportunities are missed to understand why children go missing and to reduce these incidents.

Staff have undertaken mandatory safeguarding training and understand their child protection responsibilities. However, some staff are not confident and familiar with the organisation's whistleblowing procedure, which could leave children at risk if an incident occurred requiring them to whistleblow.

The home's front door is a fire exit. However, because of a fault with the door, the staff use a keylock to secure it. As a result, anyone without a key, including children, cannot exit the building using this door unless the keyholder opens it for them. Issues with the fire doors were identified at the last inspection.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that safer recruitment procedures are always adhered to. One staff member did not undergo appropriate pre-employment checks before they started working at the home. Managers had not attempted to verify the staff member's reasons for leaving a previous role that involved working with vulnerable children. This could leave children at risk of having unsafe people caring for them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably experienced and qualified. She is committed and talks about the children with dedication. She is ambitious for children and has a thorough understanding of their needs. The manager and staff are child focused. The manager will challenge other external agencies if she is dissatisfied with the services being provided to children. Parents and professionals complimented the manager's communication skills.

Leaders and managers have good oversight of the home. They carry out regular audits of staff practice and the operation of the home, with actions and learning identified to help address shortfalls. The manager has a thorough understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses and is intent on making improvements.

Staff benefit from regular team meetings, one-to-one reflective supervision sessions and annual appraisals. The staff speak positively about the home and are enthusiastic and energised. Staff say they feel happy working at the home and receive support from management to fulfil their roles.

As part of the home's behaviour management policy, staff do not receive physical intervention training, as physical intervention is not used at the home. However, this is not reflected in the home's statement of purpose, which states that restraints are only ever used as a last resort. This information could be misleading and confusing for staff, professionals and parents.

Some staff hold a relevant qualification or are working towards it. However, there have been delays in some staff achieving the qualification within the specified time frame.

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
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) 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)) In particular, ensure that the fire exits always remain accessible.	10 June 2026
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— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or	30 November 2026

a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.

The relevant date is—

in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or

in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.

(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Information provided by such interviews should be considered 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)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's internal whistleblowing procedures. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.9)
- The registered person should ensure that information relating to restraint in the behaviour management policy is accurately included in the statement of purpose. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.44)

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: 2734923

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: post vacant

Registered manager: Annie Hughes

Inspector

Anver Rose, Social Care Inspector

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