

2742583

Registered provider: Action for Children Services Ltd

Assurance Inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to four children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since July 2025.

Inspection date: 25 November 2025

Date of last inspection: 20 May 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

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

The inspector has 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

This assurance inspection did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children.

Staff demonstrate a commitment to meeting children's health needs, and individual care plans are implemented effectively. Children's health requirements are addressed promptly, which supports their physical well-being.

Staff work collaboratively with children's placing authorities and specialist services to promote children's educational progress. This partnership working is a strength and contributes to improved learning opportunities for children.

Communication with children has improved due to staff making more use of appropriate communication aids and Makaton sign language. This enables children to express their views and wishes more freely, which enhances their participation in decisions about their care.

Managers have introduced monthly reviews of children's records and use supervision to address staff strengths and weaknesses. Staff speak positively about the support that they receive, which helps maintain a stable workforce.

Several shortfalls remain in relation to the quality of care that children receive. Key-work sessions are not consistently aligned with children's care plans, which restricts the staff team's ability to monitor progress and demonstrate the impact of interventions.

Social stories are used inconsistently and are not always relevant to children's individual needs, particularly in preparing them for medical appointments. Staff are not actively seeking support from external agencies to ensure children's emotional well-being. Furthermore, there are insufficient strategies for staff to follow when children are displaying sexualised behaviour. This particularly relates to children who display these behaviours while they are out in the community, which has the potential to place children at risk of harm.

When daily routines are disrupted, staff do not consistently plan alternative activities in advance. This lack of proactive planning leads to children becoming dysregulated and experiencing unnecessary distress.

Risk management is weak. Risk assessments and behaviour support plans are not consistently tailored to individual needs. Incident records are completed, but risks are not clearly analysed, and lessons are not drawn from these events. This reduces opportunities to improve practice and safeguard children effectively.

Agency staff do not receive supervision from managers and are unfamiliar with children's care plans. This undermines consistency and accountability in care delivery and does not reinforce the importance of their role in safeguarding.

The physical environment requires attention. Essential maintenance work and updates to soft furnishings have not been prioritised, which detracts from the overall quality and homeliness of the setting.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/05/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/05/2024	Full	Good
31/01/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be 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 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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)(g)(i)(h)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that they have oversight of all work being completed. Incidents and work should be evaluated to establish patterns and trends	20 April 2026

and identify areas of learning to make continuous improvements. The registered person should ensure that there is consistency of oversight across the service, including in relation to staff supervision, challenge to partner agencies and working with multi-agency professionals.	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child’s needs; seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children’s home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(d))	20 April 2026
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— Ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect;	20 April 2026

help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)(v)(vi))	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child’s age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; strive to gain each child’s respect and trust; understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children.	20 April 2026

(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(viii)(ix))	
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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; 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; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health; and that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly. Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)(v)(b)(d)(e))	20 April 2026
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children;	20 January 2026

the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.

After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").

The registered person must—
supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2742583

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Action for Children Services Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Emily Evans

Registered manager: Julie O'Connor

Inspector

Shaheda Dhandia, 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 looked-after children, 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 2025