

2786401

Registered provider: Action for Children

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a short-breaks service run by a national charitable organisation. The home can care for up to five children at any one time. The children's needs range from moderate to severe learning disabilities, with associated physical, health and sensory impairment and/or complex multiple needs. There are three children staying in the home at the time of inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2024.

This is the first full inspection after the homes registration in March 2024.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 September 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: Not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have fun and enjoy new experiences from their stays at the home. Children are welcomed on arrival by caring and dedicated staff. One parent said, "[Child] always enjoys coming, they run straight into the garden when they get there". Another parent said, "[Child] is more than happy to come, the staff are on the ball, and communication is great". As a result, families trust the staff and the good quality care their children receive.

Children have a welcoming home that is child centred. Photos of the children and their artwork are beautifully captured and displayed. This helps children to feel positive about themselves and enhances their self-esteem.

Children enjoy their stays at the home and are encouraged to enjoy a range of physically and emotionally stimulating activities, such as arts and crafts, jacuzzi, sensory room, and trips to the parks. Children were seen enjoying sand play, building marble runs, and spending time having a cup of tea with staff talking about their holidays.

Staff are knowledgeable in the children's individual care and support needs, and they talk proudly and fondly about the children. They have a sound understanding of the children's communication methods and their preferences. However, communication tools around the home are not always used and children do not always have opportunities to feedback to staff about their stays.

Overall, children's plans are clear and provide staff with relevant information to meet their needs. Routines are recorded in an easy-to-follow manner to ensure that consistent care is provided in a 'quick reference form'. However, not all records are up to date to provide staff with clear guidance for some children.

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

Children feel safe and trust staff. Parents expressed their confidence in the ability of staff to keep their children safe when staying at the home. Staff have a good understanding of the children's vulnerabilities, and they ensure that they are highly vigilant when supporting children in the home and when accessing the community.

Staff receive training and demonstrate a good awareness of safeguarding should they have concerns about a child. Staff are also clear about how they would escalate concerns both internally and with external agencies.

The organisation uses safer recruitment procedures effectively when employing new staff. Staff who work in the home have been suitably checked. This helps to promote the safety of children.

Staff rarely use physical intervention, they ensure that risks are identified, assessed, and managed effectively. Staff take into consideration children's health and individual needs when supporting them to express their feelings and emotions. When incidents occur, staff use calming approaches and the sensory environment to help children become calmer.

Issues in relation to the garden that were noted at the registration visit in March 2024 have not been addressed. This impacts the children's ability to safely access this area of the home without close staff supervision.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home changed provider and was registered with Ofsted in March 2024. Children have continued to access their short breaks without any impact on them. This is due to the commitment of the dedicated staff to ensure a smooth transition.

There is a real sense of teamwork and strong working relationships between staff, who acknowledge difficulties and support each other. Leaders and managers show an ambitious vision, they have high expectations for what all children can achieve and ensure high standards of individualised care.

The registered manager understands the home's strengths and weaknesses and has a robust development plan to improve the home and prevent shortfalls. Furthermore, the independent person provides a good level of external scrutiny and makes helpful suggestions regarding practice development.

Staff are experienced and familiar with the individual needs of the children. Leaders and managers support the staff and work with them to improve the quality of care and outcomes for children.

Staff benefit from receiving training that enables them to meet the children's needs well. A part time nurse offers additional training which supports the complex health needs of some children. New staff receive a thorough induction and value the opportunity to shadow experienced staff to provide them with the skills to support all children who attend the home.

Staff receive supportive supervision from trained staff although these have not been completed monthly in line with the homes policy. However, monthly 'team days' are an opportunity for staff to reflect on practice, discuss children's needs in detail, and staff can request additional support to enhance their skills further if needed.

Despite some challenges with the recruitment of staff, children are provided with a stable team. When sufficiency of staff has become a concern, changes to admissions and occupancy rates have been made to maintain safe care.

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 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. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(d)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that maintenance is completed around the home and grounds in a timely manner and that garden play equipment is repaired with the utmost urgency.	18 October 2024
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(2)(c)) In particular, ensure that children's plans consistently provide clear guidance for staff on how to meet each child's needs.	18 October 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. In particular, ensure staff have the skills and knowledge to communicate with all children to gain their views. ('Guide

to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

- The registered person should ensure that staff supervision is delivered in line with the home's policy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 2786401

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Action for Children

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

Responsible individual: Kate Isham

Registered manager: Charlotte Jorgensen

Inspector

Hannah Cox, Social Care Inspector

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