

# 2817884

Registered provider: Action For Children Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is an eight-bedded short-break service for children with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and associated healthcare needs. It is run by a national children's charity.

There were four children receiving short breaks at the time of the inspection and their views were considered.

The home is led by a registered manager.

### Inspection dates: 11 and 12 August 2025

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

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:** none

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children enjoy their short breaks at this home. Staff help the children to have fun and enjoyable times. There are excellent relationships between the staff and children. One parent said, 'The staff are so good, they make it a home from home.'

Children now enjoy an improved physical environment in the home. The staff and manager have created a more welcoming environment. This includes improvements to bedrooms and communal areas. There is a large garden with new play equipment for children to enjoy. Staff fully involved the children in choosing themes for rooms to make sure that children were at the centre of decision-making for what the home should look like.

Children's care plans have been updated. They now include a child-friendly profile section. Care folders contain the information that staff need to provide effective care for the child and keep them safe. The manager intends to develop these further. Children's goals are also to be integrated into the plan, and everything is recorded from the child's viewpoint.

Staff help children to learn. They have very good relationships with children's schools. Communication books are used between staff and teachers and these help them to exchange information. Staff also inform teachers of any changes in a child's behaviour. Staff read to children and help them with learning words and counting.

The staff understand the children very well. Staff know each child's specific way of communicating. A range of communication methods and tools are used. These are clearly identified in the child's care plan. They include pictures and symbols and the use of simple phrases. Staff know the children well and understand what certain sounds and gestures mean.

The wishes and feelings of children are heard and responded to by staff. This includes through one-to-one sessions with children. Children choose activities and help to create a menu for each week. There are photographs of the children on the activity they have chosen. Children having fun and enriching experiences are central to their stays at the home.

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

The manager ensures that any allegations or complaints are taken seriously and acted on with urgency. This includes conducting thorough investigations and record-keeping. There are appropriate referrals made to safeguarding professionals and good professional collaboration to ensure that the children's safety remains of paramount importance. This keeps children safe.

Children's behaviours that challenge are managed very well. Staff are trained in de-escalation and safe care approaches. Staff very rarely hold children to keep everyone safe. When they do, it is as a last resort and for the briefest time. The manager adds oversight comments on all incident records for staff to learn from.

The staff have a good grasp of children's individual risks and vulnerabilities. This includes the additional vulnerabilities of children with learning disabilities. Individual risks to children are assessed and responses recorded, such as the risks for children who do not comprehend danger. Children are always supported on a one-to-one basis. A higher ratio is identified for some children when accessing the community.

Behaviour support plans are in place for some children. These plans are for those children whose behaviours are more challenging for staff. Staff are guided to respond to the unwanted behaviour in specific ways, which are individual to each child. This is to help the child to understand what is happening.

The manager ensures that safe recruitment practices are in place for new staff joining the team.

Children do not go missing. However, the high risk to a child is acknowledged should this happen. Responses are recorded in risk assessments. There is a clear policy and procedure for staff to follow. Children have protocols to help the police should a child go missing.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager has been away from the home for a long period. However, a home manager was quickly appointed. She is very experienced and from the existing care team. Consequently, there has been continuity for the children and staff. The staff enjoy working at the home and feel that the changes have been excellent.

The manager knows the children very well. She speaks warmly of each child. She said, 'They [children] are lovely. We have amazing children. We are here to create a safe, fun environment for them.'

The manager knows the strengths of the team and areas to develop further. This is supported by good workforce and home development plans. Action plans identify when improvements should be made and by whom.

All staff receive a comprehensive induction programme. This is overseen by the manager and team leaders. It includes relevant training and staff observing practice for two weeks. A range of further training then continues. Almost all staff have completed a residential care qualification.

Staff receive regular supervision from the manager or a team leader. They are reflective sessions that include staff well-being. There is an open-door approach to management. Team meetings also take place regularly. This helps staff to feel well supported.

A range of quality assurance tools are used by the manager. This gives her comprehensive oversight of the home. She spends time observing staff practice. She also spends time with the children.

The manager feels extremely well supported by the responsible individual. She receives effective monthly supervision. She can access support at any time. She also feels supported by two team leaders, who she describes as 'brilliant'. She highly values the contribution made by the whole staff team.

## 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       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.<br/>(Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))</p> <p>This specifically refers to any revised statement of purpose being submitted to HMCI within 28 days.</p> | 31 August 2025 |

### 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:** 2817884

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Action For Children Services Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Susan Connor

**Registered manager:** Georgina Murray

## Inspector

Shaun Caplis, Social Care Inspector

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