

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	14/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC000673
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Action for Children
Registered provider address	3 The Boulevard, Ascot Road, Watford WD18 8AG

Responsible individual	Catherine Joyce
Registered manager	Paul Kelly
Inspector	Colin Imrie

Inspection date	14/12/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC000673

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is good because:

- The staff offer high standards of care and nurture for the children and young people. They show patience and skill in their work and are committed to helping the children and young people make greater progress towards becoming more independent. The staff do not give up when the children and young people have challenging behaviour, and persevere well with the children and young people who have complex needs and disabilities, supporting them to make significant progress.
- The children and young people clearly enjoy attending the short-breaks service for their allocated time. There are a wide variety of activities available at the home and a wide variety of activities which they can do with support from staff away from the home. The children and young people clearly have good relationships with the staff and enjoy their time with them.
- The children and young people are kept very safe at the home. No child or young person has gone missing and supervision levels are appropriately high. There have been no safeguarding concerns that have had an impact on the children or young people. The staff give the children and young people clear boundaries and expectations and these help to promote safety and well-being. The staff do use some physical interventions when necessary, but these are appropriate and do reduce over time. The staff rarely use sanctions and again these are only used when appropriate.
- The staff work well with parents and other external professionals. There are close working relationships with schools and with specialist workers, and these all benefit the children and young people.
- The registered manager clearly sees both the strengths and the weaknesses of the staff team and the service and has set about making a number of improvements. He has a clear vision for this development and has made a good start.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets the Care Standards Act 2000, 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
12. In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to following internal safeguarding reporting procedures, the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(a)(v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person.	18/01/2017
14. In order to meet the care planning standard, with particular reference to care plans being clearly recorded and pathway plans being in place, the registered person must ensure that children: (1)(a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.	18/02/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees: undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)) In particular, this relates to ensuring that all staff, including casual staff, are up to date with all refresher training.	18/02/2017
The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which: are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)) In particular, this relates to ensuring that all records are accurate, dated and signed by the person making them.	18/02/2017

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a charitable organisation and is registered for the care and accommodation of up to five children who have learning disabilities to live permanently, and for up to five children who have learning disabilities to have short breaks.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/01/2016	Full	Good
03/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/01/2015	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The home is a large building which contains two separate services. There is a five-bedroom short-breaks service and a five-bedroom long-stay residential home in the same premises. The organisation which runs the home is in the process of separating these two parts of the service and registering them separately, so that there will be two registered managers running two different homes. This is a positive move. The building has a homely feel and staff are caring and nurturing. The staff team members are generally of long-standing and are skilled and knowledgeable about their work. The registered manager has been at the home for less time. He recognises the strengths of the team in providing high quality care and is now making efforts to update planning and recording practices and to further professionalise the service. The staff are supporting him and are making improvements to these areas of work, some of which still have some way to go, but it is a positive start. A requirement has been made to further improve recording practices. The children and young people visiting this home clearly enjoy their visits and those living at the home also value the experience. They have very good relationships with the staff and they do make clear progress. One child was unable to sleep in a bed or have other items of furniture or bedding in their rooms, and is now able to do both. Their behaviour has improved dramatically and they are much more able to control their continence. They have become more relaxed and their behaviour has become less challenging. These are clearly very big steps towards becoming more independent. Other children and young people also make good steps towards becoming more independent. There are examples of the children and young people learning new self-care skills, such as brushing their teeth, learning to prepare meals and carrying out household chores. Two of the young people who are long-term residents have recently attended a residential stay at an outdoor activities centre and taken part in a number of exhilarating adventure activities. These were greatly enjoyed, but also helped develop confidence and resilience. The staff have good relationships with schools, and the children and young people who are long-term residents are making progress at school. Equally, there are good links with health services and the health of the children and young people is well	

managed. The children and young people do contribute to the day-to-day running of the home and two of them were able to devise the new name for the proposed long-stay home. This is particularly appropriate as they were the first young people to move in when the home originally opened.

The children and young people are helped to gain independence skills, and planning for their moving on is evident and appropriate.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The children and young people at this home are kept very safe. The reason for this is clear. Staff are both caring and attentive. The supervision of the children and young people is good and staff keep them engaged and interested in positive activities. The staff clearly understand risks and assess them well. The staff are aware of the risks to individuals and are able to work with them safely. A number of the children and young people have complex health needs with substantial risks attached. The staff are clear about these and what to do if the need arises. There have been several recorded instances when staff have taken the correct course of action in situations that required medical intervention or assessment. No child or young person has gone missing and no unsafe incidents have happened at the home. There has been no record of any bullying at the home. Staff deal well with any day-to-day squabbles and falling outs and use these situations well to teach the children and young people about sharing and living together. There have been two occasions when the staff have not followed the internal safeguarding reporting procedures. Neither of these incidents had an impact upon any child or young person's safety. These were both picked up by the registered manager and dealt with appropriately and effectively. Some additional staff training on safeguarding has taken place following the first of these incidents and more is planned. A requirement has been made to ensure that further mistakes in following procedures do not happen. The staff are used to dealing with challenging behaviour and are skilled at this. They do use physical interventions at times and these are appropriate and effective. The number of times the children or young people are held does reduce over time. The staff give the children and young people clear boundaries and expectations, and these are effective, so that the use of sanctions is very low.	

Because staff work well to help and protect the children and young people they do become increasingly safe over time.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The registered manager has been in post for a little over a year. He has a social work qualification and is currently studying for an appropriate leadership and management qualification and is within the regulatory timescale for this. He is ensuring that the aims and objectives, as stated in the home's statement of purpose, are met. The two requirements made at the previous inspection have been met. A recommendation made at that inspection has not been fully met and has been raised again as a result of this inspection. The registered manager is very child-centred and clearly values the high quality care given to the children and young people by the staff. He prioritises the children and young people and ensures that they all make continued progress. He does, however, clearly want to make improvements to the service. To this end he has taken some time to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the staff team and the service and has a clear plan about how to address these and build on them. The staff say that he is an approachable and supportive manager and supervision records evidence this. Training for the staff is ongoing but there are some of the staff, particularly the casual staff team, who are not up to date with all their refresher training. A requirement has been made to address this Care planning is starting to improve but the lack of quality record-keeping is holding this back. Further improvements to care planning are now needed. This includes ensuring that every young person over the age of 16 has a pathway plan in place, which two currently do not. A requirement has been made to address these issues. The registered manager has built good relationships with families, carers and with external services and workers, and works well in partnership with them. He is able to challenge others when required. The home is going through a period of change, including splitting into two separate	

homes and developments to the levels of professionalism of the workers. The registered manager has started this process well, but further improvements are required and the four requirements outline these.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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