

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	18/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC000673
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Action for Children 04764232 1097940
Registered person address	Action for Children, 3 The Boulevard, Ascot Road, WATFORD, WD18 8AG

Responsible individual	John Egan
Registered manager	Roseanne Montague
Inspector	Jacqueline Malcolm

Inspection date	18/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged Good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. The registered manager holds overall responsibility for two services that have long-term residential and short breaks functions. Competent and experienced managers operate the services in partnership with each other on a day to day basis. This works well. The organisation remains in the process of re-registering the homes with Ofsted and when concluded, this will provide two defined service provisions. Requirements relating to management monitoring continue to be work in progress and at the time of the visit the provider remained within timescales. On completion, this should enable the views of children and young people, parents and professionals to be included the management monitoring reviews. In addition, careful monitoring should resolve some remaining recording issues. A recent team day explored this issue to support the staff team to improve in this area. The recommended staff training raised at the last inspection should soon be fully achieved. Other recommendations have been successfully addressed. For instance, improved communication tools, such as visual aids and picture exchange communication systems enable children and young people to express their wishes and feelings. This helps them to get their points across; feel listened and responded to, which combined reduces their sense of frustration and allows their full participation. Children and young people whose stay is long-term or short breaks continue to prosper from the good standard of care. This is delivered by this aspirational and diligent management and staff team who have a detailed knowledge of their needs. Consequently, the children and young people continue to make good progress and thrive, which is measurable against the 'outcome arrows'. For some young people this means that they can now tolerate sleeping on an appropriate mattress and duvet instead of the floor. They can also put their coat on and get their shoes and bag ready for school, which they previously found difficult. Social workers express satisfaction with the service. They say, '(Name of child) appears to enjoy coming to (Name of the service) and gets on well with staff and his peer group' and 'From where he was to where he is now, I can see a big, big	

difference.'

Children and young people's progress is notable in a number of key areas. For example, good partnerships between the home, school and parents spurs them to learn and develop life and social skills. Those who live at the home long-term have excellent school attendance. Their positive school reports indicate their development and achievements. A social worker said, 'He absolutely loves it!'

Positive friendships are encouraged between children and young people on short breaks, some of which have carried on outside of the home. Leisure activities provide all children and young people with a range of fun and stimulating down time.

Children and young people's health outcomes are properly monitored due to their access to well integrated health services that respond to their complex health conditions. Children and young people reap the benefits of following a healthy, balanced diet and taking regular exercise. This is noted in their subsequent weight loss. Their overall physical and emotional well-being improves and boosts their self-worth as a result of their active lives.

Children and young people are actively encouraged to do more for themselves irrespective of their age and abilities, which promotes their independence. A social worker said, 'He is doing a lot of life skills, laundry, making cups of tea for me when I visit (under supervision). They are really concentrating on things like that.'

Children and young people are safe. Effective relationships with other professionals ensure collaborative working together practices and open communication. Coupled with individual risk management, high staff ratios and the security of the premises children and young people are afforded good protection. Most of the staff team are responsive to safeguarding concerns and promptly act on any issues in partnership with other agencies. A member of staff said, 'We are pretty good at body maps.'

A management review has been convened to address one occasion when safeguarding procedures were not properly followed. There was no welfare detriment to children and young people and lessons will be learned from the experience. No children and young people have gone missing and none are deemed to be at risk of child sexual exploitation. Social workers consider children and young people to be safe. One said, 'He is in a safe environment at (name of the service).'

Children and young people continue to learn appropriate behaviours, which is supported by the mutually positive relationships, consequences and physical intervention. This is used as a last resort. A social worker said, 'They will use behaviour management that works. They sometimes have to guide him away by the shoulder. I get write ups of any interventions' and, 'It's better because when he is difficult staff change and he can talk to staff.'

The independent visitor's report provides an evaluative and valuable appraisal of the performance of the long-term and short breaks services. Managers effectively use this 'critical friend' approach to quickly drive forward improved outcomes for children and young people. The reports include positive observations and consultation with children and young people, professionals, parents and staff. Reassurance to Ofsted and other stakeholders is confirmed by the clear statement in the report that children and young people are effectively safeguarded and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.

No further requirements and recommendations have been raised following this inspection.

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for children and young people who have learning disabilities. There are five permanent places and five places for children who receive short breaks. The home is operated by a national voluntary organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/01/2015	Full	Adequate
05/02/2014	Interim	Good Progress
03/07/2013	Full	Good

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
In order to complete a quality care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (2) (c))	23/03/2016
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 (5))	23/03/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. The Guide – page 53 – para 10.11 in particular team teach; moving and handling; anti bullying; attachment disorder; outcomes arrow.

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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