

SC000673

Registered provider: Action for Children

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a charitable organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for children and young people who have learning disabilities. The home can provide care and accommodation for up to five children to live permanently and for five children to have short breaks.

The manager was registered in June 2018 and is not yet appropriately qualified.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 March 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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: 12 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/03/2018	Full	Good
13/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/12/2016	Full	Good
18/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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, 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 registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— (a) include the information and documents listed in schedule 3 in relation to each child; (b) are kept up to date; and (c) are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b) and (c)) In particular, to ensure that there is an up to date local authority care plan in place and appropriate consent forms in place for each child or young person	30/06/2019

Recommendations

- The registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

In particular, ensure that all appropriate references are taken for newly appointed staff and ensure that all references are verified by telephone. Also, ensure that all new staff have a full induction completed in an appropriate timescale and that they have sufficient formal supervision to enable them to understand and learn their work roles.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is divided into two separate parts. One has five residential beds and the other, five short-breaks beds. It has remained settled throughout the period since the previous inspection. There have been some staff changes. Some children and young people have stopped attending for short breaks and others have started. Only one young person has left the residential provision and no children or young people have been admitted.

The children and young people who live in the residential provision enjoy the experience of living in the home and they all make good or better progress. The young person who left moved on to adult care in a planned transition after a successful placement at the home. The other children and young people are settled and have plans for longer-term placements. All of them are making good progress with their independence skills, education and other personal goals and targets. Some have made particularly good progress with improving communication skills and some have made very good progress with developing more social skills.

The children and young people who attend for short breaks clearly enjoy their experience and make good progress. They enjoy a wide range of activities and are also able to work on agreed goals.

The children and young people in both parts of the home have good relationships with the staff. The staff are dedicated to their work and are caring and nurturing towards the children and young people. They encourage the children and young people to spend time in the local community taking part in activities and using local facilities and amenities, which is very positive.

The staff work closely with the families of the children and young people and this joint understanding and work benefits everyone. One social worker spoken with, who has extensive knowledge of the home, said it was 'amazing' and said they did not know what they would do without its service and its flexible approach.

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

The children and young people who live at or visit the home are supervised closely by attentive and vigilant staff. The children and young people have mostly been kept very safe. The only exceptions have been two accidents involving hot drinks, where children have been hurt. The registered manager has taken appropriate action to address these issues and practice has since changed.

The staff understand risks and make good risk assessments. They put appropriate controls in place. This is especially so when they accompany the children and young people outside of the home. There are appropriate boundaries and expectations in place and these are consistently applied.

Generally, the staff do not use sanctions with the children and young people, preferring to explain what is expected and giving guidance and appropriate direction. The staff do sometimes use physical interventions, but these are few in number and are usually short and very light touch.

Security at the home is good and staff have taken care to ensure that no child or young person has gone missing during this inspection period.

One young person has made an allegation against one member of staff. The registered

manager reported this correctly and dealt with this well. It was decided by all involved that the issue was unfounded. There have been no other complaints made by children and young people, parents or carers, or by any other persons.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager changed the management structure at the home, appointing two team leaders in January 2018 who each have responsibility for one part of the home. He has also clarified line management roles within the home, which has shared out the leadership and management tasks. These changes have had a positive effect on the service offered. Staff are generally very experienced and clearly work closely together.

The registered manager monitors care practices well. He has improved the record keeping, but the inspector found that there was some missing information and documentation which needs addressing. There are clear processes in place for staff handovers and for the organisation of shifts.

The staff said they get good support from the registered manager and also that they get good training opportunities. They said the manager was supportive and approachable.

There is some particularly good joint working with other professionals and other agencies. The registered manager has developed close links with various health services and also with education providers and there is good communication between the home and external professionals. The registered manager is adept at ensuring that services and resources needed by children and young people are found and acquired.

A recommendation has been made for the registered manager to strengthen recruitment checks and to improve staff supervision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC000673

Provision sub-type: 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: Terence Wintersgill

Inspector

Colin Imrie, social care inspector

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