

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	02/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC004429
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	Michael O'Sullivan
Registered manager	Louise Tumulty
Inspector	Anne Daly

Inspection date	02/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
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 Outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. Young people receive excellent care and support from a committed and enthusiastic staff team during their short break stays. Staff develop positive relationships with young people and ensure their diverse needs are met. This contributes to a secure and caring environment where young people are able to feel safe and comfortable. As one parent observed, 'a wonderful service, a second family. Staff are fabulous, they are professional and caring'. Young people make good progress across all areas of their development. They are able to engage in a wide range of activities and have increased in confidence as a result. Parents and professionals involved with the service all speak highly of the care provided to young people. As one parent noted 'over the years it has helped develop his independence, an ability to cope with change, socialise with peers'. A particular strength of the service is its flexibility, designed to meet the needs of the young people and their families. Introductions and matching of young people on their short break is carefully planned and regularly reviewed. This ensures that they are appropriately placed with others with similar abilities and needs. Parents feel confidence in the staff's judgement as one said 'I don't need to phone each time he stays, I'm confident and at ease with the care they provide.' This contributes to young people overall experience whilst on their short break. Young people benefit from individualised care. Care plans are agreed with families and other professionals involved. This consistent approach helps young people feel secure and enables them to make good progress. As one health care professional noted 'a wonderful provision that provides great consistency. Young people always appear to be having a lovely time'. Targets are routinely reviewed and this helps staff to monitor the progress that young people are making. Social workers and other professionals are positive about the care that young people receive and confirm that their outcomes have improved as a result of their attendance.	

The registered manager understands the strengths and areas for development for the home, and she has an ambitious and achievable plans in place to ensure the service continues to progress. These plans include developing the involvement of young people in staff recruitment and developing the service's contribution to effective transition planning.

There remains a good balance of experience among staff. Staff have a range of skills and have received relevant training to meet the needs of young people placed. The home does not use agency staff and this means that young people develop firm relationships with adults they see regularly and who provide consistency of care.

Staff understand how to support young people to behave in socially acceptable and safe ways. This is done through skilful redirection, de-escalation and gentle guidance. Physical intervention is only ever used when it is necessary to keep young people and others safe. There has been very few incidents since the last inspection. Young people however are not consistently spoken with following an incident. This means that staff are not able to reflect and learn to inform future practice.

Young people live in a safe environment where they are protected from harm. Staff use good safeguarding practices to identify risk, and implement protective measures to keep vulnerable young people safe. Staff have a high awareness of the reporting procedures relating to safeguarding concerns. Since the last inspection they have undertaken training on child sexual exploitation and radicalisation to raise their awareness of wider safeguarding issues.

There have been no incidents of young people going missing. Managers and staff are knowledgeable of the local protocol to follow with local police should such an incident take place. Staff fully understand the particular vulnerabilities of young people in their care. The ratio of staff caring for each young person is carefully assessed and means that risks are reduced and this further strengthens safe working practice.

Partnership working is strong. There is effective communication between staff, parents, social workers, specialist health care professionals and education services. This results in a good coordinated support to meet young people's needs. Staff actively advocate on behalf of young people to ensure robust plans are in place to meet their needs.

There were no requirements made at the last inspection. There is one shortfall identified as a result of this inspection to ensure that young people are consistently de-briefed following an intervention.

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to five children and young people. It is a short-break service for children and young people with learning and/or physical disabilities. The home is operated and managed by an independent provider in partnership with the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/08/2015	CH - Full	Outstanding
11/02/2015	CH - Full	Outstanding
24/09/2014	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good progress

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
The registered person must ensure that within 5 days of the use of the measure of control, discipline or restraint the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(c))	03/03/2016

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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