

SC004429

Registered provider: Action for Children

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This short-break service is registered to provide care for up to four children. Children who receive care may have a physical or learning disability and also a sensory impairment. The service is owned by a private organisation.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2015, and she holds a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/03/2023	Full	Good
12/10/2021	Full	Good
12/11/2019	Full	Good
20/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Good health is a priority for all children who access the service. All children's health needs are understood from the beginning of their placement due to a pre-admission discussion with families and social workers. Leaders and staff act as good advocates for children in relation to their health needs. Staff had been able to identify and act promptly on a medication concern for one child. The child had not come to the home with their routine medication. Leaders and staff challenged this and liaised with professionals to get the child's medication quickly rectified. As a result, this child was able to have their medication with minimal disruption.

Relationships between children and staff are supportive and nurturing. Children look forward to attending the service and enjoy spending time with the staff team. Managers and staff are playful with children and create fun experiences, such as watching movies, playing in the sensory area and going for walks. One parent told the inspector, 'It is always like a second home for my child; they are always happy.'

Staff support children to achieve their individual independence goals. Staff supported one child to develop their skills around using their toothbrush independently. As a result, this child feels more confident and is trying other areas of their independence development with their personal care.

Staff are creative when supporting young people with moving into adulthood. One staff member created a document to support the family of children to understand what education services, and other services, are available for the young people. This has been created to support young people to have a smoother transition into adulthood.

Children benefit from good-quality experiences and activities. Children have completed Christmas walks and also participated with dressing-up activities in the home. Children are introduced to important community figures, such as the police and fire services. This has been arranged to show children who is available for support in the community and to build positive relationships with them.

The home is warm and homely. Children's achievements are celebrated, and the environment feels child-focused. Children's rooms are bespoke for their stay, which provides a home-from-home feel.

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

Children do not make complaints. However, staff have ensured that children understand the complaints procedure in their own communication styles. Managers and staff operate an open-door policy. This has enabled children to feel safe and able to raise any complaints. At the end of each stay, children's views are obtained, which lets managers know if there are any areas of development for staff.

Staff respond promptly and in line with children's missing-from-care protocols when children go missing from the home. Staff's quick response of following children has prevented children from going missing from care. Children are settled back into the service following incidents, and staff re-engage them with positive experiences, including activities.

Children's risk management plans are clear and detailed for staff to follow. Staff have a good understanding of children's risks and how to respond to any concerns and behaviours. Staff are consistent in their approach and ensure that children's needs are met safely.

Staff carry out physical interventions safely. Staff attempt to de-escalate behaviours before using physical interventions as a last resort. Debriefs are completed with children and staff. However, it is not clear from the records which staff have been debriefed and whether this was completed in a timely manner.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is very committed and dedicated to children receiving good outcomes. Additionally, she wants to ensure that staff have opportunities to develop their knowledge to support children in the best way. Leaders work effectively with the wider network and ensure that children's needs have been voiced and advocated for consistently.

Recruitment is carried out safely for new staff. The manager ensures that all relevant checks have been completed for new staff. As a result, she is assured that staff are safe to work with the children.

The manager has good monitoring systems in place. The manager completes a regular monthly audit, which contains a review of children's files, health and safety, incidents and staff training. The responsible individual also completes a regular audit in the home. As a result, there is good management oversight in the home.

Staff receive good-quality supervision. Leaders provide development opportunities for the staff team by discussing staff's progress regularly and any areas where they can increase their knowledge. Leaders also regularly check on staff well-being to ensure that they are keeping well. Staff told the inspector that they are confident speaking with leaders and that they feel supported.

There have been improvements made in the way that training for staff is tracked. The training plan is clear and allows better oversight to prevent staff from falling out of timescale. Staff have completed bespoke training in line with the needs of their children. This includes specialist training, that supports staff in their knowledge and skills.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
In particular, the registered person should ensure that the recording of debriefs are clear.

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: SC004429

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Action for Children

Registered provider address: 3 The Boulevard, Ascot Road, Watford WD18 8AG

Responsible individual: Craig Hoggarth

Registered manager: Louise Tumulty

Inspector

Chanel Bryant, Social Care Inspector

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