

SC013743

Registered provider: Action for Children

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home offers long-term care for up to 14 children and young people who have profound and multiple disabilities, including communication difficulties, sensory impairment, complex health needs and challenging behaviour. The home is made up of three separate residential units which cater for groups of children and young people who have diverse needs.

A registered manager has not been in post since 3 July 2018.

Inspection date: 5 February 2020

Date of last inspection: 30 July 2019

Judgement at last inspection: good

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 judges that it has declined in effectiveness.

Management arrangements fail to provide adequate oversight of the home at all times. The organisation continues to struggle to appoint, and retain, a manager. Although several managers have been appointed, they have not remained in post long enough to successfully complete the registration process with Ofsted. An application is currently in progress, but the applicant has been absent from the home for some time. Staff cannot clearly identify who is in charge of the home when senior managers are not present. Decision making about the overall operation of the service is therefore weak and could lead to risks not being identified and addressed.

The organisation's directors have recently agreed new short-term arrangements because they recognised that day-to-day management arrangements were not satisfactory. The short-term plan includes a new manager who will commence employment immediately so that oversight and management responsibilities should be clearer. The short-term plan also includes changes which are intended to reduce the use of agency staff. A longer-term plan for the home will be finalised as soon as possible.

The requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have mostly been met. The organisation's assessment of how the home's location meets children's needs has been reviewed and provides more detail about the location. However, the assessment does not state which agencies contributed to the assessment and the area that the assessment covers is unclear. Staff therefore do not have coherent information about how the local area positively supports children's needs or what risks exist that staff should take into consideration when planning children's care.

Appropriate revisions to the statement of purpose have been completed as required. However, the revised statement was not submitted to Ofsted as necessary. This does not demonstrate that the provider ensures that all necessary actions are taken in respect of the home's registration.

Staff respond effectively to changes in children's health. Any concern that a child's health is deteriorating is quickly and appropriately managed. Staff work well with other professionals in these situations and keep in contact with children's families appropriately.

Medication administration procedures have been reviewed so that information about medication is in one place only. Regular monitoring of medication records identifies any medication errors found and staff's practice is reviewed appropriately if an administration error occurs.

Some children's complex medication schedules mean that staff spend extensive amounts of time managing medication throughout the day. Managers have not considered if the amount of time spent managing medication adversely impacts on children's quality of care or whether it has been a contributory factor to the administration errors which have occurred.

Regular physiotherapy support that some children need is not being provided. The staff have also not followed up on a replacement to a physical aid that one child requires. This has meant she has been without any aid for some time. Action was taken immediately to address these issues during the inspection , but these issues should have been identified and rectified sooner.

Staff make appropriate safeguarding referrals and they work well with safeguarding agencies if concerns arise. However, policies and procedures to guide staff were insufficiently detailed, held in different documents and were not tailored to the specific needs of children with disabilities.

Children generally continue to make good progress. One child's self-injurious behaviour has decreased, and she is expressing herself more appropriately in other ways. Children have individual photo books which show that they are enjoying a range of activities which promote their development and independence. For example, one young person is now working with a member of staff at a local theatre and this is helping him to develop his social skills.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/07/2019	Full	Good
12/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
07/08/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/02/2018	Interim	Improved 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 health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. and (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that, where necessary, agreed support for children's physiotherapy occurs. The registered person must also ensure that where physical aids are changed, they continue to pursue other agencies for replacement equipment.	31/03/2020
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that there are adequate management arrangements to cover the 24-hour period.	31/03/2020
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; especially where staff are administering complex medication regimes. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the staffing arrangements for managing children's complex	31/03/2020

medication regimens effectively promote children's welfare and safety.	
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1)(2)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they record which agencies they have consulted when compiling the location assessment. The registered person must also ensure that the area which the assessment covers is clearly identified.	31/03/2020
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1)(3)(b))	31/03/2020
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— - provide for liaison and cooperation with any local authority which are, or may be, - making a child protection enquiry in relation to a child accommodated in the home; - provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located; - provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about past abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the alleged abuse or neglect occurred; - provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response; - describe the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect; and	

describe how and to whom staff are to report, without delay, any concern about abuse or neglect of a child.
(Regulation 34 (1)(2)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that they have a holistic policy which fully covers all of the points in this regulation. The registered person must further ensure that the policy clearly outlines safeguarding risks to children with a disability.

Information about this inspection

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.

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: SC013743

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Action for Children

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

Responsible individual: Kate Isham

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Ruth Coler, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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M1 2WD

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