

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC013743
Inspector	Paul Taylor
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Action for Children
Registered person address	Action for Children 3 The Boulevard, Ascot Road WATFORD WD18 8AG
Responsible individual	Deanna Margaret Neilson
Registered manager	Gaynor Alexandra Catherine Wicks / Tracey Terry
Date of last inspection	16/12/2013

Inspection date	28/08/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a charitable organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 19 children; 15 children with learning disabilities and up to four places for children with a physical disability.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/12/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
21/05/2013	Full	adequate
06/02/2013	Interim	inadequate progress
30/10/2012	Full	adequate

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained (regulation 31 (2) (e))	31/10/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff have consistent access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and

experienced staff. (This relates to all members of staff receiving supervision in line with the organisation's policy) (NMS 19.4).

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people develop trusting and warm relationships with those caring for them. They are relaxed with staff and enjoy their company. This stability and safety enables them to progress and to develop, personal care skills, for example. The support offered to young people enables them to develop coping skills and to try different activities and outings. Particular progress has been made by young people in relation to having more varied diets and in trying new foods. These improvements are very good in relation to young people's starting points.

Young people experience very good health care and their complex health needs are met sensitively and effectively. Appointments with all health care professionals and specialists are arranged appropriately and they enjoy and benefit from well-planned support to attend these.

Young people enjoy high levels of attendance at school and are accompanied by members of staff if this is needed. This ensures that they are not isolated and are able to develop coping and social skills with their peers and friends.

Young people benefit from having their views and feelings understood. They are able to communicate in their preferred styles and this enables them to make members of staff aware of how they are feeling and what their preferences are. As a result of this they are able to make decisions about their lives such as menu and activity choice. Young people are able to keep in contact with their families and people important to them through visits, telephone calls and electronically. Staff actively encourages young people to be part of their families, even when living away from home.

Young people benefit significantly from carefully planned transitions. Their individual needs and vulnerabilities are understood and their ability to cope with change is very carefully considered. This enables them to settle well into new settings in a sensitive and planned way.

Quality of care **good**

Relationships between young people and staff are positive. The quality of such relationships is a particular strength of the home and supports young people to be cared for safely and consistently. The young people's specific disabilities mean that some develop their own communication methods such as sign language and the use of symbols and pictures. The staff understands how each young person prefers to communicate and this enables young people to be able to make their feelings and choices known.

Bespoke care plans for each young person outline how they should be cared for and supported. These are detailed and thorough. Young people are involved in the development of their care plans where possible, which takes account of their ability and understanding. Parents and professionals are also involved in the development of these plans and endorse them to ensure that they are accurate and that they promote each young person's well-being.

Young people's health needs are very well met. They are closely supported to attend medical appointments. Due to their learning disabilities some young people find medical appointments stressful and anxiety provoking. Liaison with health care professionals is of a very high standard. This ensures specific plans and arrangements are made so that the appointment can be carried out with the minimum of disruption and anxiety for the young person. Examples of support include members of staff staying overnight in hospital with young people so that they have a familiar person with them at all times.

Every young person at the home has a full time education placement. Attendance at school is embedded in the routine and young people achieve excellent levels of attendance. Liaison with schools is very good, with daily contact achieved in the majority of cases. Each young person has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) and these outline what targets and goals are in place for each young person. These are set at levels linked to their understanding and ability. Members of staff are aware of the targets and help young people to achieve them. For example, being dressed and ready for school on time and learning to make choices while they are at school.

Each young person's individual interests are known. Members of staff help young people to take part in numerous activities in the community such as swimming, going to youth club and going to the park. Clear risk assessments enable members of staff to plan how these activities can be achieved safely. For example, some young people may require two members of staff to support them while they are out in the community. The home is well equipped to provide leisure interests for the young people on site. There is a playground with equipment such as swings and a trampoline as well as a craft room and sensory room. The wide variety of activities enables young people to experience enriching and stimulating activities.

Each young person's specific cultural and religious needs are known and met. The home will celebrate various religious festivals and all young people are enabled to join in if they wish.

Most of the home is well maintained and very comfortable. The bathroom in one house needs redecoration and the carpet in the communal area of this house need to be replaced. These shortfalls have been identified in the home's development plan. Although young people's comfort has not been seriously compromised, a requirement has been made for this to be addressed.

Keeping children and young people safe good

The staff are very conscientious in keeping the young people safe. The disabilities of young people make them more vulnerable and the staff are acutely aware of this. A good understanding of each young person's vulnerabilities ensures that each young person is appropriately supported and supervised. For example, risk assessments are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are up to date and these outline what measures need to be taken in order to promote each young person's safety and well-being.

There is a clear protocol in place should a young person go missing from the home. There have been no incidents of this occurring as the young people are closely supervised, both in the home and when out in the community.

Individual behaviour management plans outline what strategies need to be used in order to support the young people, especially if they are anxious or display challenging behaviour. Behaviours and incidents are discussed and reviewed in team meetings as well as meetings between key workers and their supervisors. This means that any trends or specific triggers can be identified and addressed. As a result of this insight, incidents requiring restraint are rare. When such incidents do occur, they are assessed and reviewed by managers to see if they are appropriate and what lessons need to be learned. Records of restraint are accurate and contain all the information necessary. This enables the review process to be more efficient.

Recruitment of staff is thorough. All necessary checks are carried out on members of staff before they commence work in the home. If agency staff are used, the home ensures that the agency has carried out the necessary checks. The practice ensures that only adults assessed as suitable are selected to work with the young people.

All members of staff receive training in safeguarding and know what to do and who to inform in the event that they have concerns about a young person's wellbeing. Staff are aware of whistle blowing processes and policies if they feel that issues need to be forwarded to external agencies. This ensures that all members of staff are aware of their obligations if they feel that safeguarding concerns are not being robustly addressed by the organisation.

Each young person has a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP). This outlines what specific assistance and support they need in the event that a fire alarm sounds. All fire safety equipment is regularly tested to ensure that it is working and that the young people are protected from fire. All other appliances, such as hoists are checked and serviced as required. The health and safety of the young people is a high priority and the home's systems ensure that this is promoted to a good standard.

Leadership and management

good

The home is robustly managed. An appropriately experienced and qualified Registered Manager has been in post since September 2012. She receives close support from a senior manager from the organisation who works on site. This ensures that oversight of the quality of service being provided is thorough and that practice can be reflected upon and shortfalls addressed.

At the last inspection five recommendations were made. These have been addressed. The home has a clear behaviour management policy which ensures that all members of staff record the details of any physical interventions. This means that details available in the records can be used to identify any specific trends or patterns following these incidents. All recruitment records now contain the information needed and this includes records for agency members of staff. This shows that all necessary checks have been carried out on individuals who work in the home. All members of staff now have appraisals and attend training to ensure that they have the skills and competencies to work with the young people. Records, such as care plans and restraint are accurate and up to date and are audited by senior members of staff to ensure their quality is of an acceptable standard. Regulation 33 reports are of a good quality and identify areas for improvement. This supports the development of the improvement plan. The Regulation 33 reports are now sent to Ofsted promptly and this ensures efficient monitoring of the service.

A development plan is in place which sets out the areas in which the service can improve. For example refurbishment of the home as well as ensuring that all members of staff receive training in key areas such as safeguarding and physical intervention. This means that progress can be assessed and that there are processes in place which demonstrate that practice and quality of service is being reviewed. This is further underpinned by external monitoring of the home by senior managers in the organisation and the encouragement and involvement of parents, professionals and young people in having their views and opinions encouraged.

Sufficient members of staff are employed to ensure that the young people receive good levels of support. Agency staff members and sessional workers are used to cover any gaps in the duty roster. The home ensures that only agency members of staff who are familiar with how the home are used. This supports the consistency of care provided to the young people.

Most members of staff receive regular supervision of good quality. However this is not consistently achieved for all members of staff. Although the level and quality of care has not been compromised and staff report that they feel very well supported, this minor shortfall means that formal records of supervision are not always in place to evidence how issues are managed and resolved.

All significant events are notified to the necessary agencies promptly. This ensures that information is shared with external agencies so that they are able to respond

appropriately to issues without delay.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.