

# SC013743

Registered provider: Action for Children

Full 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 with 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 who have diverse needs. Each unit has an appointed manager who reports to a registered manager.

Currently, the home is only providing care from one of these units for three children.

There has been no registered manager since 31 March 2021.

### Inspection dates: 30 and 31 August 2022

**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 **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 13 April 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement      |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 13/04/2021      | Full            | Good                      |
| 05/02/2020      | Interim         | Declined in effectiveness |
| 30/07/2019      | Full            | Good                      |
| 12/03/2019      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness    |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Three children live in this home at present. The other residential settings have been closed and children from these services have had well-thought-through moves to new services.

Staff provide children with good-quality individualised care. Staff work closely with families and other professionals to ensure that all decisions consider children's health and care needs. This helps to ensure that children's quality of care is not compromised.

Children have good school attendance. Staff work closely with children's schools to ensure that information about children's health needs and risks is appropriately shared.

Staff encourage children to engage in enjoyable activities when they are at home. For example, staff have creatively implemented the use of a headband that helps children with limited hand movement to participate in art and craft activities.

Children make good progress and develop new skills. Since moving to the home, some children can now eat independently with minimal support from staff. Other children are now able to express themselves more using gestures, verbal cues and other communication tools. All achievements made by children, no matter how small, are recognised and celebrated.

Children attend a diverse range of activities which they enjoy. Children are encouraged to take positive risks in line with their abilities. With staff's support, children get to go for walks in the local area, take bus and train rides to the circus, and have days out to London and the seaside. This supports children to participate in a diverse range of enjoyable activities and to build many positive childhood memories.

Children are highly valued. This extends to staff helping children to celebrate their culture and to have the support they need to be able to attend church and other family occasions.

The environment is clean, well decorated and tidy. Children's bedrooms are adequately furnished and personalised to reflect their unique interests and personalities. Bathrooms and shower areas are clean and well equipped to meet the needs of children with limited mobility. This meets the requirement that was raised at the last inspection.

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

Managers and staff identify and understand children's individual risks. Managers hold regular meetings with staff to address safeguarding issues that arise. However, on one occasion, staff failed to follow the required recording and reporting process after an incident where a child obtained bruises. Although this was eventually investigated by the appropriate agencies, the failure to report this incident in line with process created an unnecessary delay.

Children do not go missing from the home. Well-documented individualised protocols are in place to help to guide staff on the action to take in the event a child goes missing.

Well-documented behaviour plans are in place for each child. These capture the child's voice and indicate how children wish to be helped to manage their feelings and emotions in line with their capabilities and health needs. Consequently, physical intervention is not used.

Managers and leaders adhere to safer recruitment processes. Thorough checks are carried out before individuals are recruited. Consequently, children are cared for by safely appointed individuals.

The home environment is kept safe, and health and safety checks are carried out accordingly.

Children receive their medication as prescribed by their doctors. However, there are no clear procedures for the storage of controlled medication. For example, some controlled medication is stored in a double-locked cupboard, while other controlled medication is in a single-locked cupboard or stored in another house which is not easy to access.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

The post for a registered manager is currently vacant. A new manager is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted but was absent at the time of the inspection.

There are ongoing shortfalls in staff receiving the required training to help them to care for children. This extends to some members of staff not receiving all their required mandatory training. This leaves staff with gaps in their knowledge of caring for children in a residential care setting.

Managers have not made enough progress to implement recommendations that have been raised in the home's fire risk assessment. As a result, a previous requirement has been restated.

Leaders, managers and staff use well-considered processes to measure children's progress. These include achievement files, review reports and managers completing regular direct observation sessions to review the staff's interactions with children.

Staff receive regular supervision sessions and appraisals. However, the new manager, who is applying to register, has not ensured that home's managers receive regular supervision sessions and appraisals.

## 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         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished, and maintained so that it protects each children from avoidable hazards to the child's health.<br/>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that all issues identified in fire risk assessments are given immediate attention and resolved without delay.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p> | 31 December 2022 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.<br/>(Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that staff receive regular supervision within the timescales referred to in the home's statement of purpose.</p>                                                                                                                                                                   | 31 December 2022 |
| <p>The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular—</p> <p>provide for liaison and co-operation with any local authority which are, or may be, making a child protection enquiry in</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 31 December 2022 |

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <p>relation to a child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response;</p> <p>describe the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect; and</p> <p>describe how and to whom staff are to report, without delay, any concern about abuse or neglect of a child.<br/>(Regulation 34 (2)(a)(b)(d)(e)(f))</p> |                         |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development.<br/>Regulation 33 (4)(a))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that the training matrix always provides an accurate record of which training all staff have completed. Where any gaps are found, the provider must put a plan in action to quickly rectify these omissions.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p>                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>31 December 2022</p> |

## Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that medicines are administered and recorded in line with a medically approved protocol. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)

## 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:** SC013743

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Action for Children

**Registered provider address:** Action for Children, 3 The Boulevard, Ascot Road, Watford WD18 8AG

**Responsible individual:** Sean Gough

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Alphie Khumalo, Social Care Inspector

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