

SC424103

Registered provider: Action For Children Services Ltd

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a short break service run by a national charitable organisation. The home can care for up to eight children at any one time. A total of 15 children are currently accessing the service. The children have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), with associated physical, health and sensory impairment and/or complex multiple needs.

Three children were accessing the service at the time of inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since August 2023.

Inspection date: 10 March 2026

Date of last inspection: 22 July 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

The assurance inspection did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children. While the home is working towards achieving the previous requirements given at the full inspection, some have not been fully embedded into staff practice. As a result, they have been restated. A further requirement has been raised from this assurance inspection.

Staff have established positive relationships with the children and demonstrate a clear understanding of their individual needs. The team has introduced a new system for setting achievable goals, enabling all staff to access this information and consistently support each child in working towards their targets.

Staff are supporting the children to ascertain their views and wishes when arranging activities in the home and in the community. There are pictures around the home showing children enjoying a variety of activities. These images demonstrate that children take part in enjoyable and meaningful experiences, and that their participation is valued and celebrated within the home environment.

Children are supported with their independence skills by encouraging them to access the kitchen to get their own snacks and drinks. Children are also supported to make their beds and put their washing in the basket.

Children who require safe space beds have specific occupational therapy assessment, providing clear evidence-based analysis which demonstrates that the intervention is necessary and proportionate to the child's individual needs.

Staff have completed the required Makaton and PECS communication training and are demonstrating efforts to apply these methods when engaging with children. However, the consistent and routine use of these communication approaches is necessary to ensure that children receive reliable, structured and effective support.

There are gaps in safeguarding practice and staff need support to understand how to record serious incidents. Following a significant incident, there has been no review or analysis of the incident, despite this being essential to understand what happened and prevent reoccurrence. When a child is non-verbal, this significantly increases their vulnerability and requires robust managerial oversight. The manager has now opened an internal investigation into this incident, following external agency involvement. It is envisaged that the internal investigation will provide key learnings that can be implemented when devising coherent risk assessments, ensuring clear guidance for staff and supporting consistent practice.

Care plans and risk assessments are not updated in line with any changes in children's behaviour and needs. This is recognised by management, and they have plans in place to review relevant documents. Furthermore, a new child accessing the service did not have a clear risk assessment or care plan in place prior to their

introduction, and the child is due to commence overnight stays. This omission creates avoidable risks to the child's safety and limits staff's ability to provide consistent, well-informed care.

Leaders and managers are not effectively overseeing mandatory training compliance. Consequently, not all staff have completed or maintained their required training, resulting in gaps in competency and creating a potential risk to the consistency and safety of care provided to children.

Supervision records do not demonstrate sufficient depth or reflective practice. While they list the topics discussed, they lack evidence of professional dialogue, critical thinking, analysis or reflection. The absence of detailed evaluation limits the ability to demonstrate staff learning, professional development or how supervision contributes to improved practice and outcomes for children. Strengthening the quality, structure and reflective focus of supervision will support staff accountability and enhance overall practice quality.

More robust management oversight is required to ensure that care plans and risk assessments remain current, comprehensive and tailored to each child's individual needs. These documents must be reviewed routinely and updated promptly to reflect any changes in behaviour, routines, risks or support strategies. Stronger scrutiny will ensure that care planning remains purposeful, responsive and consistently centred on the child's needs.



Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/07/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
27/08/2024	Full	Good
04/01/2024	Full	Good
22/02/2023	Full	Good

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, The 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 care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's plans consistently provide clear guidance for staff on how to meet each child's needs.	20 June 2026
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— - assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; - help each child to understand how to keep safe; - have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; - understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; - take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and	20 June 2026

are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies.	
(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii))	
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(e)(f)(h))	20 June 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. In particular, ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to communicate with all children to gain their views. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC424103

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Action For Children Services Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Samantha Oliver

Registered manager: Lucy West

Inspector

Shaheda Dhandia, Social Care Inspector

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