

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	16/03/2017
Unique reference number	1226969
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Action For Children
Registered provider address	Action For Children, 3 The Boulevard, Watford WD18 8AG

Responsible individual	Stephen Sipple
Registered manager	Joy Bradley
Inspector	Michael Mulvaney

Inspection date	16/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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	
<p>This home was judged requires improvement at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved in effectiveness.</p>	
<p>The manager has met three of the four requirements raised at the last inspection.</p> <p>All of the staff have completed mandatory safeguarding, physical intervention, health and safety, and administration of medication training. The manager has introduced a robust system to ensure that medication is managed safely and effectively. This helps the staff to care for the children and promote the children's safety and well-being.</p> <p>The manager has taken effective action to improve the quality of care overall. The children have personalised their rooms with support from the staff. The staff have reviewed and improved group dynamic impact risk assessments, which identify the effect of a new placement on the children already living in the home. This supports the staff to meet the children's needs.</p> <p>Key workers liaise well with multi-agency partners to identify the children's needs, which are captured in the care plans. These plans are informed by good-quality individual risk assessments. Direct work is taking place using creative and individual tools which support the children to participate in their care planning and to contribute to decisions about their daily lives.</p> <p>The manager uses bank staff and staff who work for the organisation's other homes in the region. This has been effective in reducing the number of agency staff. The consistency of care has improved because these staff have knowledge of the organisation's processes and the children.</p> <p>The staff have physically intervened to manage behaviour on 19 occasions since the last inspection. There has been an improvement in the records of physical intervention, which now meet the regulatory requirements. However, the manager has noted that further improvements are needed to enable her and the staff to understand the events leading up to an incident and to identify alternative strategies to prevent recurrence.</p> <p>Although the new staff have started their level 3 qualification, not all eligible staff</p>	

have completed the diploma as required by the regulations.

There has been one incident of a child going missing from the home since the last inspection. The manager has taken robust action following a review of this incident. She has updated the processes and procedures. Staff have received training and formal reminders about how to respond promptly if there is a future incident. There is a positive relationship with the local police, who respond quickly to calls from the home. This is particularly important given the increased vulnerability of sexual exploitation for the children who live in this home. The provider has fitted alarms to the bedroom and external doors to alert staff if children exit the home through these doors. The alarms are not currently in use but they may be utilised if the risk is assessed as high enough to warrant it.

There has been one complaint made about noise in the home. The manager has met with the complainant, which led to an amicable resolution.

The manager has reviewed the monitoring of the home and worked together with the independent visitor to make improvements in the quality of care. The case records in the children's files have improved because of the manager's auditing and the support that she has provided to the staff.

The manager provides effective regular supervision and appraisals for the staff. This has supported the staff to meet the children's complex care needs. A placing social worker commented about one child, 'This child was very distressed when she was initially placed but the staff managed really well to put behaviour management arrangements in place. Now she is presenting as very settled and has developed really good relationships with the staff.'

The children have limited verbal communication. Staff use a range of tools and skills to listen to them. The children are relaxed in the company of the staff, who have a strong sense of care and commitment towards them.

Staff work well in partnership with the children's schools to ensure that important information and knowledge are shared. This ensures that the staff working with the children replicate methods that are working well in each setting and promotes the consistency of care.

Information about this children's home

This registered charity-operated children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four children who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/04/2016	Full	Requires improvement

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

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 (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 registered person must ensure that an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification, the level 3 diploma for residential childcare (England) ('the level 3 diploma'), or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the level 3 diploma, by the relevant date. (Regulation 32(4)(5))	30/06/2017

Recommendations

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

- Keep records of restraint that enable the registered person and staff to review the use of restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure that it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the children homes regulations including quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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