

SC013402

Registered provider: Action for Children

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a registered charity in partnership with a local authority. Care and accommodation is provided in two separate and distinct houses. One house provides care and accommodation for up to four young people under short-break arrangements, and two young people permanently. The other house provides permanent accommodation for up to five young people. Young people may have a learning disability and/or a physical disability. The long-stay residential house specialises in work with young people with autistic spectrum disorder.

Inspection date: 20 February 2018

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 6 September 2017

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 requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.

At the full inspection, two requirements and five recommendations were made. The requirements have been fully met. They were concerned with ensuring that the home had sufficient skilled staff to offer young people a good standard of consistent care. Two of the recommendations related to the use of agency workers. One related to ensuring that no more than half the staff on duty should be from an agency, and the other related to ensuring that any agency workers were sufficiently skilled. Both these recommendations have also been fully met.

Since the last inspection, 11 staff have been successfully recruited. This represents a bespoke, focused effort from both the human resources and management teams. These new staff are at various stages of completing the home's comprehensive induction and training packages. Staff say that they feel appropriately equipped to do their new jobs, and the vast majority have previous experience of working with young people who have a disability. This recruitment has had a positive impact on reducing the home's use of agency workers. Few are now needed, and those used are familiar to young people and are experienced workers. These staff changes have had a positive impact on existing staff morale and, most importantly, mean that young people benefit from skilled and consistent care.

Three further recommendations were made; two of these have been fully met, with satisfactory progress being made on the third recommendation.

The first recommendation related to staff previously raising concerns that the lack of a home minibus meant that young people who are wheelchair users could not access community activities. The registered manager has resolved this issue effectively by training staff so that they can drive a hired minibus, and also by purchasing taxi cards for eligible young people. This means that young people who have physical disabilities now have the same leisure opportunities as others.

The second recommendation concerned staff practice in one of the two houses whereby all young people were checked at the same frequency each night. This did not adequately reflect the young people's individual needs. Since the last inspection, the home has collected data that detailed each young person's sleep pattern. This data was then analysed, and the level of night staff scrutiny was adjusted to meet young people's individual needs. This means that each young person now gets an appropriate, and bespoke, level of care during the night which balances their privacy and safety.

The final recommendation related to the recording of any incidents of physical restraint. These are now detailed in a separate log. However, these recordings do not contain all of the necessary information detailed in the regulation. This limits effective management scrutiny. There will, therefore, be a further recommendation about the quality of recording of incidents of physical restraint.

There have been some safeguarding issues in the home. These have been well dealt with, and notifications to Ofsted have been timely and appropriate.

There have been improvements to the presentation of one of the homes in particular. It is now much more personalised and presents a warm and homely feel.

The registered manager has continued to be ambitious for improvement to the care offered in the home. She has introduced a new recording system using the quality standards and focusing on encouraging and improving young people's outcomes. Staff are currently being trained in its use.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/09/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
01/11/2016	Full	Good
16/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendation

- Ensure that the required recording made of restraint incidents include sufficient detail to identify effective practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

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: SC013402

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Action for Children

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

Responsible individual: Shelagh Frankcom

Registered manager: Jhenni Izquierdo

Inspector

Bridget Goddard, social care inspector

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