

SC013402

Action For Children

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a registered charity. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for 11 children who may have learning disabilities and/or a physical disability. The service is provided in two separate houses. One house provides care and accommodation for up to four children under short-break arrangements and up to two children to live permanently. The other house provides care and accommodation for up to five children to live permanently.

The home's registration is currently subject to a notice of restriction of accommodation. This means that no new admissions and no short breaks are permitted. The children who lived at the home at the time of the notice may continue to live there.

The home has been without a registered manager since January 2020.

Inspection date: 21 January 2021

This monitoring visit

The main purpose of this monitoring visit was to check the home's compliance with the notice restricting accommodation.

This enforcement notice was issued on 26 November 2020 under section 22B of the Care Standards Act. The notice followed the monitoring visit that was completed on 20 November 2020. During that visit, significant shortfalls were identified and 12 requirements were raised.

The notice restricting accommodation is in force until 18 February 2021. Meanwhile, the home and the notice are subject to Ofsted monitoring and review.

The main outcome of this monitoring visit is that the provider is complying with the enforcement notice. One child who lived at this home at the time of the notice being

issued has left and three have continued to live there. No other children have been admitted. The provider stopped offering short breaks on the day of the notice.

The underlying purpose of the notice is to give the provider the opportunity to focus the home's resources on improving the service for the three children who live at this home.

The provider has acknowledged shortfalls and developed improvement plans. These plans are being implemented but there has been limited or no progress in many areas. Improvements are not sufficiently monitored to ensure changes are being sustained.

Independent scrutiny and assurance through external monitoring visits has been hampered by a lack of access to any records held electronically. There have been gaps in staff receiving supervision. A report into allegations concerning a member of staff highlights long-standing difficulties with staff communications and professional boundaries.

The leaders and managers recognise the scale of improvement required due to a legacy of inconsistent management and high levels of incidents. In this context the provider has made the decision to close both the residential house and the short-breaks service. As a result, the acting manager is in the process of cancelling their application to register. The placing local authority for the three children and the local designated officer are reported to have supported the decision to close the provision.

The provider is committed to implementing the improvement plan up until closure has been completed and is committed to ensuring a successful transition for all three children. However, incidents of poor practice are still happening, such as insecure disposal of medication. Any delays in children being able to transition from the home could mean the current care arrangements will continue; this is a concern if the identified improvements are not made rapidly.

All 12 requirements that were raised at the previous monitoring visit are restated in this monitoring report.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/01/2020	Full	Good
19/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/07/2018	Full	Good
20/02/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs;</p> <p>if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and</p> <p>seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation.</p> <p>(Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)(d))</p>	21 March 2021
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p>	21 March 2021

<p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose;</p> <p>protect and promote each child’s welfare;</p> <p>treat each child with dignity and respect;</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p>	
<p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and</p> <p>children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding;</p> <p>take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child’s health and well-being needs; and</p> <p>understand and develop skills to promote the child’s well-being;</p> <p>that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require.</p>	<p>21 March 2021</p>

(Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(c))	
<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 home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b))</p>	21 March 2021
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child; and</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(h))</p>	21 March 2021

<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that each child's relevant plans are followed.</p> <p>(Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c))</p>	21 March 2021
<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p> <p>(Regulation 23 (1))</p>	21 March 2021
<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.</p> <p>(Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))</p>	21 March 2021
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p>	21 March 2021

<p>the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.</p> <p>(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>	
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child—</p> <p>is instigated; or</p> <p>concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>(Regulation 40 (4)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))</p>	<p>21 March 2021</p>
<p>The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions.</p>	<p>21 March 2021</p>

(Regulation 44 (5))	
<p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and</p> <p>make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.</p> <p>The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.</p> <p>(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))</p>	<p>21 March 2021</p>

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

The visit was undertaken during the COVID-19 (coronavirus)-related restrictions through off-site activities.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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, Hertfordshire WD18 8AG

Responsible individual: Bethan Davies

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Juanita Mayers, Social Care Inspector
Brenda McInerney, Her Majesty's Inspector

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