

2535376

Registered provider: Area Camden Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to three children aged between 11 and 18 years who may experience social and emotional difficulties. The home registered with Ofsted in August 2019. The manager registered in April 2021.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 6 December 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/12/2022	Full	Good
02/11/2021	Full	Good
24/02/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children experience bespoke care planning and support. This is meeting their needs and helping them to make progress from their starting points. Staff work well together and focus on building trust and relationships with children, helping them to feel secure and valued.

The quality of relationships between professionals, carers, children and their families is a strength and something we know staff work hard on to develop. This helps support children to have consistent and quality time with family and friends and those who wish to help them make progress.

Children are supported to engage in education, and staff have worked creatively and consistently with schools to sustain their engagement. As a result, children have been encouraged to attend an alternative educational setting, providing different opportunities and skills for life. Children benefit from good routines, weekly planners, incentives and persistence from staff members who promote their education.

Children share their wishes and feelings freely with staff during weekly meetings. The minutes of these meetings include an action plan on how staff will respond to requests and suggestions. This is supporting children to have their say and make choices about their home. Children's choices are reflected clearly through their care planning, and staff are strong advocates on their behalf.

Children live in a comfortable home that is well maintained and homely. Staff have positive relationships with children and one another, creating a family environment. The home has numerous photos of the children enjoying various activities and holidays together. Children's bedrooms are personalised with their own style and creativity.

Children are encouraged to be independent and learn to take care of themselves. For example, they are given incentives to clean their own rooms and cook their own meals. A social worker confirmed that, as part of pathway planning, children start to complete an independence skills book.

When children move into the home or when they leave, the manager and staff plan these transitions with sensitivity and care. This helps children to settle quickly and understand the reasons why they need to move on.

Children benefit from carefully made life-story books that document the time they have spent living at the home. These books capture the children's experiences and memories of the home.

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

Children say they feel safe living at this home. Risks are well identified through careful planning before the manager agrees that a child can move into the home. This helps the staff to understand any known risks, plan for and reduce risk, and keep children as safe as possible.

Children's individual risk and behaviour management plans support staff to understand triggers for certain behaviours and give them strategies to manage situations and prevent escalation. Some plans are too long, meaning new and agency staff will struggle to read and implement them quickly.

If children go missing from the home, carefully recorded protocols and essential information help staff to act quickly to find them or report them missing. This information is clear and regularly updated. Staff are proactive in their response to attempting to find children and keep in touch with them when they are outside of the home. Consequently, instances of children going missing have been reduced.

When children return home after being missing, there are no clear records of whether independent return home interviews have been requested from the placing authority or if and when these have taken place. This means that staff lose the opportunity to understand the reasons why children may have been missing and the ability to make changes to prevent further incidents occurring.

Staff understand and work carefully to protect children from those who seek to exploit them. Risks of exploitation are quickly identified, and comprehensive and multi-agency safety planning helps to reduce risks. Positive, relationship-based work with children contributes to the positive management of behaviours. Known risks for children are addressed with them regularly through key-work sessions.

Staff complete safeguarding training during their induction, as well as having access to online safety, child exploitation and radicalisation training. Staff have shown an understanding of the processes to be followed, and this gives confidence that any child protection issues will be promptly reported to the appropriate agency.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is run by an experienced, skilled and effective registered manager. The manager has worked hard to provide an environment where staff feel supported and children can make progress and discuss their difficulties.

Leaders and managers are ambitious for children and have been persistent in providing individual care to promote children's well-being. The manager feels supported by the organisation in how she wants to run the home.

Leaders and managers know the children well and are hands-on with a good understanding of their plans and progress, or lack thereof. When children are not getting what is required, leaders and managers are strong advocates for children

and support them to have external advocates or complain about services when required.

Staff feel well supported and describe regular and effective supervision, which includes action plans that are followed up as a continuum. Staff receive yearly appraisals, which identify learning needs, areas for improvement and onward personal development. This helps to support positive practice and addresses poorer performance and learning needs.

Leaders and managers know the home well and already recognise the areas raised for improvement during this inspection. The main area for improvement is the ratio of staff on shift to children. During weekends and overnight, there is only one staff member on shift, which is not enough to meet the needs of each child living at the home. Some impact was seen, for example in staff training and paperwork, and on two occasions, children have brought friends into the home without staff always being aware. Despite this shortfall, no children came to any harm.

Leaders and managers do have contingency planning in place for lone working, duty cover and a lone worker risk assessment. This does not allow for all scenarios, such as children leaving the home, staff being unable to follow them or a medical emergency. The organisation would prefer additional staffing and is currently advertising. However, staff workforce recruitment is currently a widespread issue.

Leaders and managers have established real strengths in working partnerships that are effective for children. Extremely positive feedback was given from various sources about the can-do attitude the staff have towards children and supporting their progress. For example, a commissioner said, '[Name of home] provides a beyond proactive response. The manager is exceptional, and the organisation and response from staff are exemplary.'

Leaders and managers support children's identity needs, and this is reflected across case recordings, which give children's background, ethnicity, religious and dietary needs. Additionally, staff provide positive support to children to challenge discrimination.

The requirement and the recommendations from the last full inspection in December 2022 have been met.

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 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>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that staff are not lone working for long hours or over the weekends.</p>	<p>30 June 2023</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should seek to ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. The home should take account of the information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. This is specifically in relation to working closely with placing authorities to understand push-and-pull factors for children who go missing. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered manager should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. This is specifically in relation to keeping risk assessments and behaviour management plans concise and relevant. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 42, paragraph 9.5)

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: 2535376

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Area Camden Limited

Registered provider address: Malvern View, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior,
Bromsgrove B60 4AD

Responsible individual: Joanne Capuano

Registered manager: Karolina Slaska

Inspectors

Christine Kennet, Social Care Inspector
Amena Begum, Social Care Inspector

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