

1277158

Registered provider: Oaktree Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private organisation. It provides care for up to two children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The post for a registered manager is vacant.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 July 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 19 December 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/12/2023	Full	Good
13/09/2022	Full	Good
28/03/2022	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
17/11/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Despite the safeguarding concerns identified during this inspection, the child said that they are mostly happy in the home and have access to a range of leisure activities.

The child has made some progress since moving into the home and has established positive relationships with the core staff team. The child can identify individuals from the staff team who they can talk to if they are worried or upset. However, when the child has raised a complaint, it is unclear what action has been taken and if the complaint has been treated seriously. This does not help the child to understand that their views are listened to and acted on.

There have been several changes to the staff working in the home. This has led to inconsistencies and confusion for the child. On one occasion, a staff member used inappropriate language and displayed threatening behaviour to a child. This was poorly managed by staff and immediate action was not taken to safeguard the child.

Most staff understand the importance of education for the child and have supported them to return to school to achieve national qualifications. However, records are poor and do not clearly demonstrate the progress made and the targets that the child has achieved. This is a missed opportunity to demonstrate the child's progress from their starting points.

Staff support the child to access health services and attend relevant appointments. Additionally, specialist services have been identified to promote good health and meet the child's individual health needs. However, the arrangements for managing medication are poor, and errors have not been identified in the administration and recording of controlled medication.

Some staff do not provide care and help that are sensitive and responsive to the child's sense of identity. Care practices do not support the child to develop a positive self-view and to increase their ability to form and sustain attachments and build emotional resilience.

The home environment requires redecoration throughout, and outstanding repair work needs to be addressed. The child is unable to access the tumble dryer as it is locked in a staff office.

Staff support the child to maintain relationships with family members. This means that the child can see the people who are important to them. Records of key-work sessions with the child include lots of information about the work carried out on matters such as missing from care, positive friendships, the dangers of vaping and alcohol. These records provide a good insight into the discussions that some staff have with the child about the risks they may face.

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

Some staff and the manager working in the home do not follow the procedures for responding to concerns about the safety of the child. Not all child protection concerns are immediately shared with the placing authority, and records do not provide a clear insight into the actions taken to safeguard a child.

Managers have not ensured that there is a strong and proactive response from all those working with the child that reduces actual harm or the risk of harm to them.

Safeguarding practice is reactive, and staff lack professional curiosity when a child is at risk of harm. There are concerns about the ability of some staff to keep the child safe and understand their responsibilities in promoting the welfare and safety of the child.

Records and conversations with a senior manager demonstrate that managers have failed to appropriately manage all safeguarding incidents. Delays in reporting safeguarding matters have meant that safeguarding professionals have not been notified in a timely way to allow them to take effective action. However, senior managers have now taken action and reported all safeguarding matters to relevant safeguarding professionals.

The new manager has not ensured that all staff are fully aware of all the risks associated with children misusing substances or being sexually or criminally exploited. Individual risk assessments are not up to date and do not address all known vulnerabilities for the child effectively. The plans in place do not help staff to minimise the risk of harm as key details about the child's known risks and increased vulnerabilities are not all included. This does not ensure that all adults caring for the child understand the current risk factors.

Physical intervention is not consistently used in line with the company's policies and procedures. During one intervention, a child sustained a head injury due to poor management of the incident. The new manager and staff failed to ensure that the child received appropriate medical attention. Senior managers have since reviewed all incidents and have identified learning opportunities for staff involved.

When consequences are used, these are often not restorative in nature. This does not help the child to understand the consequences of their behaviour nor help them learn to make positive choices. Records of consequences are not evaluated by the manager and do not include the child's views about the consequence that they receive. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that this strategy is helping the child to learn from incidents.

Staff are not recruited in line with safer recruitment procedures. Gaps in employment history are not explored and not all requested references are obtained. Leaders and managers have not scrutinised or evaluated all the relevant information that is available to them. This does not evidence that appropriate action is being taken to determine

staff's suitability to work in the home. This unsafe practice could place children at risk of harm.

Managers have not ensured that there is a record of the actual hours that staff work in the home. This is a safeguarding concern and does not demonstrate that there are sufficient staff caring for the child each day.

The core team of staff have a good understanding of what to do when a child goes missing from the home. They look for the child during missing-from-home incidents. Direct work has been carried out with the child to discuss the reasons why they go missing and to reiterate the risks. This has supported the child to understand the risks and how to keep themselves safe.

The responsible individual has developed an action plan and carried out investigations into child protection matters to ensure that safeguarding practices improve and include effective management oversight.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has left the company. A new manager has been recruited and has been in post for a few months. However, at the time of this inspection, they were not in work. The new manager has failed to sustain the improvements which were identified at the previous visit. Shortfalls identified previously have reoccurred. An absence of effective leadership and management seriously compromises the welfare and safety of the child.

Management oversight and monitoring and review systems are weak. The new manager has not used the monitoring systems in place to ensure that there are improvements in the quality of care provided to the child. For example, oversight of the child's records has not identified shortfalls in staff practice or care planning. Poor staff practice has therefore been left unchallenged and does not promote the child's safety or welfare.

Recording lacks accountability. Managers do not consistently review and update the child's care plans and risk management strategies. This does not ensure that the care and support needs for the child remain relevant or that the strategies in place remain effective. Consequently, staff do not have access to up-to-date guidance to help them to minimise risks for the child. This fails to keep the child and staff safe and does not demonstrate strong leadership.

Staff are not provided with regular practice-based supervision or team meetings. This is a missed opportunity to develop their skills and discuss care practices. Staff are not being supported, through supervision or debriefs, to reflect on training or significant events in the home. This does not support the development of good practice, and the quality of care provided to child is therefore not improving.

There is a range of mandatory and additional training available for staff, including specific courses to meet the individual needs of the child. However, records show that there are gaps in the training accessed by staff, including some mandatory courses.

Monthly visits are carried out by an independent visitor. However, reports have not identified the shortfalls highlighted at this inspection and they are not shared with Ofsted within the required time frame. Furthermore, the home's statement of purpose has not been reviewed effectively and does not contain up-to-date details of the staffing arrangements.

The workforce development plan and the location risk assessment have not been updated. Arrangements to understand feedback from the child, family members and professionals are not effective. Managers do not use feedback to inform the care that the child receives or the actions that should be taken to improve the child's experiences.

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 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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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 are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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; and that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(d))	22 August 2024

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; 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and 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)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	22 August 2024
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.	22 August 2024

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose; protect and promote each child’s welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(i))	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy (“the behaviour management policy”) which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children’s home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. The registered person must ensure that— 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— the name of the child; details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure;	22 August 2024

the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; 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")— has spoken to the user about the measure; has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and 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. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)(c))	22 August 2024
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and	22 August 2024

have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(d))	22 August 2024
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b))	22 August 2024
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must—	22 August 2024

maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; and ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b))	
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2))	22 August 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should have a workforce development plan which can fulfil the requirements of Regulation 16, Schedule 1. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

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: 1277158

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Oaktree Childcare Limited

Registered provider address: Ground Floor, Seneca House, Links Point, Amy Johnson Way, Blackpool FY4 2FF

Responsible individual: Lee Prescott

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Michelle Edge, Senior His Majesty's Inspector
Leanne Carr, Social Care Inspector

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