

2526435

Registered provider: Shalamar Children 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 four and 17 years who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2023.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 September 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 12 December 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/12/2023	Full	Good
02/08/2022	Full	Good
23/09/2021	Interim	Improved effectiveness
28/04/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager was not present for the inspection. Both children contributed to the inspection.

Children are not engaging in education. Both children have very low school attendance. The staff do not always call the school to let them know that children will not be attending that day. Managers work closely with the school to develop education plans that are in line with the children's wishes and feelings.

High staff turnover has had an impact on children. Children spend significant time in their rooms. Children said that they do not like to go out with staff as they do not know them. Children's rooms are not positive environments. They lack storage facilities and personalisation. When items of furniture have been broken by children, these have not been replaced quickly.

Two children have moved on from the home in an unplanned way. One child was moved by the police after a period of being missing without returning to the home. Another child attended hospital during a mental health crisis and did not return to the home. For this child, staff shortages meant that their moving on plan was not followed and they were not supported by staff from the home for the duration of their time in hospital. For other children, moving plans have been positive, with the home sending cards and presents to the children for important birthdays after they have moved on.

Children have been on holiday to the seaside and have been able to take part in fun activities of their choice. Children have enjoyed trips into big cities and pamper days at the home.

One child said that they want to live at the home and that they feel safe. They said that there are some staff who really care for them.

Managers work well with external professionals. Information and updates are shared in a timely way with the relevant people. Managers regularly attend multi-agency meetings to formulate care plans and safety plans for children. Professionals gave positive feedback in relation to the home's information-sharing.

One child has been experiencing a decline in their mental health. The home sought appropriate support and followed the guidance of health professionals to keep this child safe. They have advocated for this child and sought appropriate ongoing mental health support.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff have not always managed relationships between the children to prevent them from negatively influencing each other. Since living at the home, some children have been influenced into behaviours that they had not previously displayed. For one child, the incidents and severity of being missing from home have increased since living there. One child provided another child with illegal substances. This child did not have a previous history of substance misuse.

Children are frequently missing from the home. For one child, there have been significant safeguarding concerns around incidents of missing from care. This child has gone missing with another child from the home who did not previously have a history of going missing in this way. At times, staff ratios do not allow staff to immediately follow children. This is not in line with the home's missing-from-care procedure. In recent weeks, there has been a significant reduction in the number of incidents of children going missing from care.

One child requested one-to-one time outside of the home with a member of staff as they wanted to talk about their emotions around difficult events in their life. This one-to-one time was cut short and the child was brought back to the home to allow the staff to go out and look for another child who was missing. This resulted in the child who had their one-to-one time cut short causing significant damage in the home.

Children have door alarms in their rooms to allow staff to monitor their whereabouts in the home. Children have spent time in each other's rooms overnight without the supervision of staff. This was not adequately explored and addressed by the manager in her review of incidents.

Incidents of restraints are low. When restraints have occurred, these have been necessary and proportionate. The staff recognise restriction in freedom of movement as a restraint and have appropriately recorded times when the kitchen door needed to be locked. However, records of restraints do not clearly show what date the child has been spoken with and what date the staff have been spoken with. After one restraint, the staff were not spoken to about the measure in the required timescale.

Children have made a number of allegations and complaints. This is evidence that children feel able to complain and know how to do so. For the majority, these are followed up appropriately. Investigations into the allegations are thorough and involve relevant professionals. However, one allegation against the registered manager was not followed up sufficiently at the time of the allegation and was not referred to the relevant authorities. This was not picked up by leaders and managers and was identified by the inspector at the time of inspection.

When significant concerns have been identified from missing-from-home episodes, the manager has taken appropriate action and worked with the local authority and the police to make plans to keep the child safe; risk assessments have been updated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager was not present for the inspection. The responsible individual and a deputy manager from another home in the organisation have been overseeing the running of the home in the absence of the registered manager.

Monitoring and review processes are not being used to adequately review and make improvements to the care offered to children. When there have been concerns in relation to staff practice, these have not always been identified and followed up by the manager. When staffing has been increased to support the children's needs, there has been no formal review of this staffing level before it has been decreased again. On occasion, this has led to further incidents.

On one occasion, a member of staff had not properly recorded the administration of medication and this resulted in a child being given a second dose of medication early. The member of staff did not have the training to administer medication. This was not identified by the manager in her review of the incident. Additionally, this incident was not followed up with the member of staff in supervision. This was an action that the manager had identified had happened on her review of the incident.

Management reviews of incidents lack professional curiosity and do not explore ways to prevent recurrence.

Reports to Ofsted are not always sent without delay after incidents. On one occasion, an update to Ofsted after a significant incident omitted important information.

Staff receive regular supervision sessions that focus on well-being, training needs and the quality of direct work with the children. Staff attend regular team meetings and are guided by the organisation's in-house therapist in relation to their practice with children.

The organisation has a plan in relation to management support and oversight for the time that the registered manager is away from the home. The responsible individual is heavily involved with the home and has a good understanding of the needs and challenges that the home is facing. He is exceptionally clear on the ethos of the home and is ambitious for the home and children. There are plans in place to address shortfalls.

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— 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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(v)(vi)(b)) In particular, ensure that: when children raise safeguarding concerns, these are adequately explored and shared with the appropriate authorities without delay; children are not negatively influenced by each other; and children are appropriately supervised in the home, including when in each other's bedrooms, in line with their relevant plans.	6 November 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	6 November 2024

promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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)(c)(d)(e)(h)) In particular, ensure that: there are sufficient staff in line with the children's relevant plans; managers use monitoring and review systems to identify and address shortfalls in relation to staff practice; and staff who administer medication have the skills and qualifications to do so.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)) In particular, ensure that:	6 November 2024

there is sufficient staffing to follow a child's transition plan for a move out of the home; and when the placement of each child in the home is reviewed, consideration is given to the impact of children on each other.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))	6 November 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any child who has been restrained is given the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint into account. The registered person should ensure that records of such conversations are used to inform analysis and evaluation of incidents. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. In particular, supervision should be used to address any concerns relating to staff practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff have the relevant training to administer home remedies in line with medication guidance. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets children's needs. In particular, children should have adequate storage, and broken furniture in children's bedrooms should be replaced promptly. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 2526435

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Shalamar Children Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 63a, Thames Industrial Estate, Princess Margaret Road, East Tilbury, Essex RM18 8RH

Responsible individual: Paul Lacy

Registered manager: Louise Dodds

Inspector

Andrea Bounden, Social Care Inspector

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