

2526435

Registered provider: Shalamar Children Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home registered in July 2019. It is one of two homes operated by a small private provider. The home provides care for up to three children who cannot live at home or in a foster placement because of their social, emotional and/or behavioural needs.

There has been no registered manager since 1 January 2021. The newly appointed manager has not registered and has commenced maternity leave. An interim manager had been in post for two weeks prior to the inspection. The interim manager is not registered currently.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 13 October 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 April 2021

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: 22 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/10/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

Children's experiences at the home are variable. While some children make progress, other children's time at the home has ended in ways that are inconsistent with their original plans. The breakdown of placements not only affects the children who have moved on, but has the potential to affect the sense of belonging and permanence of other children.

Managers and staff have some understanding of the progress that children are making. However, this understanding is hindered by a lack of clear records.

One child has recently made progress with his education. He spoke positively about this. When children arrive at the home without an educational placement already arranged, there is insufficient consideration of this in the impact assessments. For one child, the absence of a school placement has led to a move on from the home.

The role of advocacy in the service is underdeveloped. Although staff tell children about their rights to access advocacy, the children choose not to do so. Managers have lacked the curiosity or tenacity to explore this.

There are areas of the home that are currently locked at night. These include the kitchen and the lounge. No risk assessments have been completed to justify the need for these restrictions. This significantly detracts from the homeliness of the environment for children.

The staff and managers spoke warmly about the children. Children said that they feel safe. Interactions between staff and children were relaxed. Professionals said that the staff and children get on well.

The staff are supporting children to see their families when it is safe to do so. For one child, this has led to them seeing family members for the first time in a long time. This is a positive development that could enable an important relationship to be repaired and maintained.

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

The risk assessments that are completed by managers and staff lack clarity, consistency and accuracy. They are lengthy, difficult to follow and contain errors and contradictions. The assessments omit relevant information. While this has not resulted in a child being harmed, inaccurate and incomplete risk assessments mean that staff do not have access to clear guidance on how to keep children safe.

Managers have improved their immediate response when children go missing from the home. Staff and managers actively search for children as a good parent would, thereby reducing the risk to children.

Managers do not ensure that protocols relating to the risk of children going missing are up to date. Consequently, the police are not provided with up-to-date information. In addition, managers do not consistently challenge local authorities when they fail to provide return interviews for children. As a result, children do not consistently have access to this safeguard, and risk assessments are not informed by the information that may potentially be gained through the interviews.

The staff know how to raise concerns about colleagues. Managers recognise the need for staff to report concerns about senior managers and directors to an independent person. However, the staff are not sufficiently aware of how to report concerns and who to report them to. Consequently, the effectiveness of this intended safeguard may be reduced.

There have been no restraints at the home since the last visit. Staff attempt to manage behaviour through discussion and de-escalation. The staff help children to learn when their language is prejudiced or derogatory towards women.

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

Managers have not addressed several of the shortfalls that were identified at the assurance visit.

The directors write impact assessments prior to children moving into the home. These are weak and fail to sufficiently consider clear and predictable risks arising from potential mixes of children. As a result, these risks are not satisfactorily explored, and consequently the risks to children become greater.

Recruitment records relating to agency staff are not always adequate. It is not always clear if the required information has been gathered. Issues that should provoke managerial curiosity have not done so. In addition, the home's recruitment policy offers managers no guidance on what to do if a potential staff member has worked abroad. Managers were unaware of the options available for seeking overseas checks. This does not ensure that the children are as safe as they could be.

The management team's understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home is not strong enough. For example, monitoring arrangements have not identified significant shortfalls in risk management documentation.

Feedback from professionals is positive. The staff say that they feel supported and that they have confidence in managers. Staff are receiving regular supervisions. They have access to and attend training that is designed to meet the needs of the children.

Managers and staff spoke warmly about the children. Managers were realistic about the issues identified during the inspection.

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
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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vii)) In particular, ensure that risk assessments and missing-from-home protocols are clear, accurate and up to date, and that staff understand the expectations regarding reporting any concerns about senior managers.	7 May 2021
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—	7 May 2021

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)(b)) In particular, ensure that impact risk assessments give sufficient consideration to the risks arising from potential mixes of children.	
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; 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)(h))	31 May 2021
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iv))	7 May 2021

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; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of 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)(c)(d)) In particular, ensure that agency staff have had the required checks, and that managers are guided on and understand how and when to complete overseas checks for staff.	7 May 2021
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children have access to appropriate advocacy support, and that, when possible, this is provided by a person who the child chooses. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.16)
- The registered person should 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 provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child, for example

the progress that the child is making and the skills and abilities that they are developing, must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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 Park, Princess Margaret Road, East Tilbury RM18 8RH

Responsible individual: Samuel Connor

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Ashley Hinson, Social Care Inspector
Jo Cox, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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