

2537801

Registered provider: Exceptional Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of a number operated by a private provider. It is registered to care for three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The current manager has managed the home since it was registered in September 2019.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 February 2020

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: This is the home's first inspection.

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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
Statement of purpose 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))	27/03/2020
Fitness of workers 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 if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that– 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), (3)(d))	27/03/2020
Other records Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must 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))	27/03/2020

Review of quality of care In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating– the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45(2)(a)(b)(c))	27/03/2020
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Recommendations

- Ensure children have access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning, unless there are specific safeguarding reasons why this would be inappropriate. In such cases, the home should consider whether and how it can support the child to access a computer and the internet safely. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 29, paragraph 5.19)
- Ensure medicines are administered in line with a medically approved protocol. Records must be kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused. Regulation 23 requires the registered person to ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. These are fundamentally the same sorts of arrangements as a good parent would make but are subject to additional safeguards. Where the home has questions or concerns about a child’s medication, they should approach an expert such as a General Medical Practitioner, community pharmacist or designated nurse for looked-after children. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- Ensure where there is a possibility that a child will run away or go missing from a children’s home placement, their placement plan should include a strategy to minimise this risk. If the child is looked-after, their care plan (arranged by their placing authority) should include such a strategy. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 45, paragraph 9.24)
- Ensure the behaviour management strategy should be understood and applied at all times by staff, and must be kept under review and revised where appropriate. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 46, paragraph 9.34)
- Ensure the registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal

monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

In particular, independent visits should primarily be unannounced.

- Ensure the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are happy and safe and value living in this home. They have excellent relationships with staff and managers. One young person commented, 'The home is good; staff are helpful and care about me.' A parent commented in a recent Ofsted survey, 'I am more than happy with the staff and the home and I can't fault them in any way.'

Staff ensure that there are consistent rules and boundaries and encourage young people to make the right choices. This helps young people to feel safe and to demonstrate positive, appropriate behaviours. There is a reward and consequence system in place which helps to motivate young people. However, the current system is confusing for both staff and young people.

Each young person receives good-quality, individualised care. However, placement plans do not currently include specifics about each young person's daily routines. Consequently, it is difficult for staff to ensure a consistent approach. Staff actively encourage young people's interests and ensure that they engage in a range of activities. These include ice skating, swimming, going to the gym, shopping and the cinema.

Young people are offered choices and they are listened to, which promotes a sense of belonging. They say that staff regularly ask about their wishes and for their views. However, there are lost opportunities to record and evidence this within the home's documentation. This makes it more difficult to see how the young people's wishes and views have been acted on. There is limited promotion of equality and diversity, and there are few opportunities for young people to learn about difference.

Young people are supported to engage in education. Education attendance has improved since they moved into the home, and one young person is engaging in home tuition while awaiting a school placement. However, young people do not have access to a computer in the home which would support their education and learning.

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

Young people are safeguarded effectively from harm and risk management is effective. There is a clear reduction in young people's risk-taking behaviours following their admission to the home. One young person's episodes of going missing from home have significantly reduced since moving into the home. The young person said, 'Staff showed me they cared, so I had less reason to be missing.'

Recording of incidents of missing from care are detailed and robust. However, young people do not have individualised missing from home risk assessments in place, which means that reporting procedures and preventative strategies are unclear.

Young people value the staff team, and positive relationships are evident. One young person said, 'I feel I can talk to the staff and I can explain how I am feeling.' Staff members demonstrate a good level of insight into each young person's support needs. The staff manage the behaviour of young people well, resulting in no incidents of physical intervention.

Key-worker sessions help to educate the young people in key areas of risk, including being missing from care, child sexual exploitation and internet safety. This has led to reductions in risk-taking behaviour. One young person commented, 'Staff have helped me to work on my reactions and emotions and I get in less trouble.'

The young people's health needs are promoted by staff. The young people look healthy and have a varied diet and a good sleep pattern. However, weaknesses were evident in the recording and administration of medication. For example, one young person who failed to conclude her course of antibiotics was not referred back to her GP promptly enough.

Young people benefit from a close working relationship with a local therapeutic service. Therapists visit the home regularly to offer the young people and staff advice and guidance. For example, they have recently completed an attachment training session with staff.

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

The manager is new to the role and is currently completing a leadership and management qualification. The manager and deputy manager are passionate about achieving good outcomes for young people and know the young people well.

The staff team are enthusiastic and motivated, although the team consists of several inexperienced members who are new to the profession. However, they have received tailored, in-depth support and guidance from the management team. One new staff member said, 'I love it and the support from managers has been good.' Another member of staff commented in a recent Ofsted survey, 'Management are always on hand or give advice if needed.'

Induction for new staff is effective, and ongoing training is offered to develop their skills and knowledge. Supervision is being completed regularly with permanent staff. However, bank staff have not received regular supervision. Similarly, some weaknesses in staff recruitment were identified during this inspection. This includes insufficient exploration of gaps in employment and of references from former employers.

Some shortfalls in the effectiveness of management monitoring were identified during this inspection. Managers' time has been needed to support new and inexperienced staff. Weaknesses include incomplete staffing rotas, accuracy of the safe area risk assessment, recording of fire drills and staff familiarity with updated

documentation. In addition, the admissions and discharge register does not currently include the required information.

All external monitoring visits of the home since it was opened have been announced before they have taken place. This does not allow the independent visitor the opportunity of observing practice in the home when staff are not expecting them to visit. This reduces their effectiveness.

The manager and staff team work well with external agencies to support young people. A social worker commented, 'I have been impressed by the communication and the manager is very knowledgeable.' However, young people's social workers would benefit from regular written feedback on the progress of the young people.

The home's statement of purpose has not been updated for some time and contains incorrect information in relation to staffing.

The manager has an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. The manager also has plans in place for improvement and to progress the home.

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: 2537801

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Exceptional Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Malthouse Business Centre, 48 Southport Road,
Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 1QR

Responsible individual: Susan Rolfe

Registered manager: Nicola Devine

Inspectors

Suzanne Birchall, social care inspector

Mandy Williams, social care inspector

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