

2537801

Registered provider: Exceptional Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This 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 manager was registered with Ofsted in April 2021.

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

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 June 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 18 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: compliance notices were served under regulation 12 and regulation 13 at a monitoring visit on 26 November 2020. Both notices were met at a monitoring visit on 5 January 2021.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children say that they are happy at the home. The staff have created a nurturing environment where children are encouraged to be respectful to the staff and their peers. Children thrive in a culture where staff appropriately give warmth, hugs and reassurance. Children say, 'It is like living in a family and the staff team genuinely care about us.'

Children move in to the home in a well-planned way. The manager carefully considers the needs of all children against the skills of the staff team. A social worker for one child said that the home's matching process was robust. Equally, children say that they feel listened to and involved in decisions about their care.

This good practice continues as children settle in the home. Purposeful and honest key-working sessions address the necessary areas that are key to meeting children's needs. Staff confidently tackle challenging topics, such as safe internet use, safe relationships, and sexual health. Children respond with the same degree of honesty and, overall, listen to the advice that staff give them.

Proactive staff recognise the challenge of motivating children to want to go to school. This practice has encouraged children to attend school more regularly. Some children who previously struggled to attend now enjoy 100% attendance. One child proudly showed the inspector examples of her schoolwork. This renewed interest in education stands to improve children's life chances.

Staff are interested in promoting children's physical health, mental health, and well-being. One child has been supported to stop smoking. Some children have benefited from professional support, such as from child and adolescent mental health services and in-house therapists. The staff team works closely with health professionals to complement this support. A few errors in relation to refused medication not being recorded were noted at this inspection. Although there was no negative impact on children's health, such errors should have been avoided.

Children are carefully and sensitively supported to maintain appropriate and safe family time with the people who matter to them the most. Arrangements are unique to the risks and circumstances and are always at the child's pace.

In the event of an unplanned end to placement, children remain at the centre of staff practice. In one such example, a child was supported to leave the home in a calm and respectful manner even though this had to occur quickly. The provider has worked with the local authority and the child's family to arrange a planned transition to another home within the company, which is in line with the child's wishes.

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

Children say that they feel safe and attribute this to the support and guidance that they receive from staff. In recent months, the manager has reviewed and fine-tuned case recording, risk assessments and strategies to safeguard children. Such plans are accurate, up to date, and used effectively.

Children are encouraged to find positive ways to manage their behaviour and air their differences and concerns. Bullying is not an issue according to the children. Staff give children the opportunity to take risks that are appropriate to the children's age and understanding. For example, children have learned valuable lessons in being able to make mistakes and learn from the consequences.

Staff understand their roles and responsibilities to safeguard children. For example, in response to a serious allegation made by a child about one of their peers, staff have taken swift action to notify all relevant professionals and have supported children appropriately. This practice was endorsed by a child's social worker, who said that the communication was prompt and the situation was well managed.

Following a requirement set at the last visit, the manager has driven improvements associated with complaints and allegation management. Records show that consultations and referrals to the designated officer are timely, accurate and relevant. This improved practice stands to provide better safeguards for children, who say they feel that they can raise a complaint or concern without fear or anxiety.

The staff's good use of their relationships with the children means that they understand their potential triggers and the behaviours that children may feel they need to resort to. Staff are quick to divert and distract children. Therefore, the need to physically intervene to prevent children from harming themselves or placing themselves and others at risk has reduced. Children feel more able to talk about their difficulties and are finding safer ways to cope with these, for example, by writing down their feelings.

Similarly, there has been a reduction in recent months with regards to children going missing from home. Staff have a competent grasp of the guidance they are required to follow when children attempt to go missing. This includes talking to children, remaining vigilant and following children where necessary to keep them safe. This practice reinforces to children that they are cared for. This direct support from staff is complemented by the work of external agencies. For example, one child receives dedicated input from a youth worker that focuses on educating him about child criminal exploitation and risks associated with going missing.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Under the competent and consistent strong leadership of the manager, staff practice has significantly improved in all aspects of the care that children receive. Of the 16

requirements and recommendations made at the last inspections, 15 are now judged as being met.

Staff and children alike commend the style and approach of the manager. Staff and children talk about an improved culture of positive morale. The manager makes appropriate challenges both externally and internally. Consequently, wider communication with other associated agencies has significantly improved and stronger senior management support systems are now in place.

Staff are positive about working in the home and feel well supported by the manager. All staff, including bank staff, are provided with regular practice-related supervisions. The manager is proactive in developing her staff team's knowledge base by obtaining training specific to the needs of the children, such as child sexual exploitation, gang culture and substance misuse training.

Staff are recruited and vetted in line with safer recruitment. During the home's transition to the current registered manager, there have been changes to the staff team and some staff have left their roles. However, this has not had a negative impact on the standard of care that the children receive. The staff team are child focused and work together effectively to prioritise the safety of all children.

Ofsted are notified about incidents when children are missing overnight or when children have made allegations against staff. On one occasion, the manager has failed to notify Ofsted when the police were called for assistance to check a child's welfare, when the staff could not safely access the child in their bedroom. A good practice recommendation has been made.

The review of the quality of care report is a transparent account of the home's progress and identifies areas that require further development. Regular feedback is obtained from children, families, and social workers about their experiences of the home. However, this is not included in the report to consider a full evaluation of the quality of the service provided. Monthly monitoring enables the manager to monitor trends and patterns in the home. She works closely with the senior manager to evaluate outcomes and agree improvement targets for the coming months.

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 registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1)) Specifically, the manager should ensure that children's medication is administered as prescribed by the general practitioner and when children refuse medication this is evidenced on the medication administration record. Prescribed medication that is no longer required by children should be disposed of immediately using the correct procedures.	06 August 2021

Recommendations

- 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. Specifically, the manager should ensure that the feedback they obtain from children, staff, social workers and families is included in the review of quality of care report in order to provide a full evaluation of the service provided. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that they notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40 (4)(a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious (40 (4)(e)). Specifically, when police assistance is required to check on children's well-being during incidents, the manager should ensure that they notify Ofsted with a regulation 40 notification. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

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 Limited

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

Responsible individual: Sean Milnes

Registered manager: Natalie Johnson

Inspector

Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector

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