

2544851

Registered provider: Alexanders House Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children who may have emotional and/or social difficulties. The manager is suitably qualified and experienced for the position held.

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 2 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 May 2021

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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
-----------------	-----------------	----------------------

Not previously inspected		
--------------------------	--	--

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children feel safe. They have trusted, secure relationships with staff, who are committed to them. As a result, children are making good progress from their starting points. Families and professionals provided consistent feedback during the inspection to corroborate this. One professional said, '[Name] feels very connected and is where he wants to be. He has relayed to me he is happy and feels heard and understood.' This means that children are cared for by staff who understand their needs.

Staff seek children's views on a regular basis at children's meetings and key-work sessions. This means that children have a say on their care and planning.

The home is warm and comfortable, although there is evidence of historical damage that has not been addressed. Apart from in the 'quiet room', there are no photos of the children or any other evidence of the children's presence anywhere in the home. This does not promote the children's identity and sense of belonging.

Most children attend school and are doing well. Staff communicate with education professionals regularly. This ensures that they understand the children's needs, and supports their continued progress. One child's educational need is not met. The manager identifies creative ways to encourage attendance and seeks appropriate advice and support from other professionals, including the virtual school. The manager attends education meetings and advocates on the child's behalf, and escalates concerns about the lack of education. This means that children are supported to reach their academic potential.

With the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, children are attending a range of after-school activities, including those in the local community. Staff support children to take part in new experiences and discover new interests, such as swimming lessons, going to the youth club and the gym. This support helps children to develop their confidence in exploring their surroundings, which expands their outlook on life.

Children are generally healthy in this home. Staff support them to attend health appointments, including for routine and urgent check-ups. The emotional health needs of children are prioritised by staff. One professional said, '[Name's] immediate acute mental health is progressing to improve. This can be attributed to the safe, secure, consistent relationships and boundaries at [name of home].'

Children do not know how to make a complaint and are unaware that they may make a written complaint without staff's assistance. This means that children are not aware of the process to raise a complaint. However, children can identify a member of staff who they can speak to if they have any concerns.

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

Before children are admitted to the home, the manager completes an impact risk assessment. While this considers whether it is safe for the children already living in the home, it does not consider the impact of any potential risks from the group on the child coming to live there. There is no analysis of risk and consideration of how children's behaviour may impact on each other. This means that staff do not have the correct information to help them keep children safe.

Records, including children's risk assessments and behaviour support plans, are clear, easy to read and have a detailed plan of how the risks will be managed by staff. However, some known risks are not included in these children's case records. This means that staff do not have an accurate understanding of all known risks, which places children at further risk of harm.

Key-work sessions cover a range of topics, including sexual health, personal hygiene and sexualised language. Children are encouraged by staff to complete online training courses, for which they receive certificates. These include drug and alcohol awareness; social networking and internet safety; and self-esteem building. This work helps children to develop a greater awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

The recording of physical interventions is not completed in line with regulations. While the records are clear and detailed, there is no evidence of whether staff have been debriefed after the incidents. This failure means that the manager has no mechanism in place for reflection and to scrutinise practice to ensure that it is safe.

Each evening, staff lock internal doors, including the kitchen, the living room and the 'quiet room', which denies children access to these areas of the home. This also presents as a fire hazard as the kitchen leads to a fire exit. This practice creates an institutionalised environment for children and leaves them feeling undervalued.

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

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. He has been in post since the home opened in December 2019 and is supported by a stable staff team. This means that children benefit from consistent staffing arrangements, which helps to provide them with stability and security.

Safer recruitment processes are followed when staff are appointed, which provides assurances that they are suitably vetted and qualified to provide care. New staff complete an induction which focuses on supporting their learning and development. This enables staff to respond to the children's presenting needs.

Staff receive regular supervision. A focus on reflective supervision has recently been introduced within the home, which enables staff to reflect on their experiences of caring for the children and make changes to their practice. Staff feel supported by

the manager and are confident to seek advice and support. One member of staff said that this is the most supportive job that they have had.

The manager ensures that staff receive training that is relevant to the individual needs of children in their care. Training records are kept up to date and identify when training needs to be renewed. Four members of staff have not completed physical intervention training. Scrutiny of the staffing rota identifies that untrained staff have been alone on shift together on more than one occasion. Should the need arise for a child to be held, staff are unable to do this, which places themselves and the children at risk of harm.

The most recent statement of purpose, while available at the time of the inspection, has not been forwarded to Ofsted within the required timescale. This means that Ofsted is unable to scrutinise information to ensure that children are cared for in line with the statement of purpose.

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 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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))	18 June 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— 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))	18 June 2021
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	18 June 2021

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; 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)(h))	
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— notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(b))	18 June 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)(iii)(iv))	18 June 2021

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 ensure that— 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; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(b)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to restraint records.	18 June 2021
--	---------------------

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are aware of the complaints procedure and are able to access the forms and make a complaint without the need to ask staff, in order to protect their privacy. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.13)

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: 2544851

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Alexanders House Limited

Responsible individual: David Palmer

Registered manager: David Watson

Inspector

Paula Shepherd, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021