

2548334

Registered provider: Oak House Children's Home Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to three boys. The provider states in its statement of purpose that it aims to provide residential care with a therapeutic emphasis and multi-agency involvement. The provider has another children's home in the area and an independent school.

The registered manager has been registered with Ofsted since the home's registration on 14 August 2019.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 March 2020

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people receive good-quality emotional support, and this has a positive effect on their well-being. Their improved well-being helps them to make progress in other areas of their lives. Their attitudes towards themselves and others, their behaviours and their safety improve significantly over time.

Staff know the young people in their care very well. Staff are in tune with young people's moods and are able to provide specifically-tailored support before situations escalate. Young people receive the right level of support at the right time. This approach has been particularly effective in helping young people with a history of self-harmful behaviours to find better coping mechanisms when overcome by negative thoughts.

The home's non-judgemental approach helps young people to form relationships with staff and to begin to talk about their own experiences. The home's psychotherapist provides individual consultations to young people on a weekly basis to help them to develop better self-awareness and more constructive ways of dealing with difficulties. Staff work closely with mental health professionals to implement young people's therapeutic plans and to ensure their effectiveness.

Staff are good advocates for young people within the network of professionals. Staff make sure that young people's views and feelings are always represented and considered. Young people's engagement with professionals improves over time.

In partnership with teachers, staff deploy creative ways to help young people to re-engage with their education. Staff encourage young people to read and discuss various topics and to visit libraries and museums. This approach has been effective in enabling young people to rekindle their curiosity, return to their formal education and engage better with the learning opportunities that it offers.

Young people's experiences of living at this home are positive. They are comfortable in their well-maintained and well-furnished home. They have easy access to a wide range of recreational activities in the area. They also enjoyed their activity-packed summer holiday.

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

Staff provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for young people. The structure of daily routines encourages young people to have a sense of order in their lives. This sense, together with staff's clear and consistent boundaries, helps young people to feel increasingly safe and secure.

Staff have good understanding of risks to young people and know how to protect them. Staff review young people's individual risk assessments and management

plans after each incident. This ensures that the safeguarding strategies remain relevant and effective.

The high staffing levels and staff's vigilance contribute to young people's safety in the home and in the community. Staff are mindful to give young people some time on their own. A trust development programme supports young people's increasing ability to manage risks to their own safety and be safe, without staff's direct supervision.

Young people receive helpful information and advice from staff about keeping safe. Young people also complete training on a number of safeguarding topics, such as online safety, gang awareness, knife crime and first aid. Their awareness of risks is improving.

Staff always follow an effective multi-agency procedure for reporting young people when they are absent without authority or are missing from care. Staff work closely with the safeguarding partners to jointly address the factors that underlie young people's behaviours that put them at risk. As a result, the frequency of the young people going missing reduces significantly over time and they stop going missing.

Young people receive effective support to improve their behaviours. Staff favour the use of praise, rewards and restorative justice over sanctions and restrictive behaviour-control measures. This positive approach to managing young people's challenging behaviours is effective at reducing the frequency and seriousness of incidents over time.

Staff use physical interventions as the last resort, when it is required to protect young people or adults. Staff reflect together on what has happened and try to identify any learning points.

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

The home is young people-centred. Leaders and managers closely monitor young people's progress and ensure that they receive good-quality support. However, some other aspects of the leadership and management require improvement to be good.

Some written policies and procedures do not provide sufficient guidance to staff. This includes policies on the use of surveillance in the home, dealing with allegations against staff and the staff disciplinary procedure. Not having appropriate policies and procedures increases the risk of weak practices, as it has been the case with the use of surveillance in the home.

Young people receive support from staff who are experienced but not qualified for their roles. Seven staff members that should have obtained an appropriate qualification by now are still working towards it.

The registered manager is working towards obtaining the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare. Although the registered manager holds a Level 3 qualification in care, no documentary evidence was available at the home to demonstrate this. Other staff files also lacked the evidence of the qualifications that staff said that they had. Other staff files also lacked the evidence of the qualifications that staff said that they had.

Staff recruitment files have all other required information. However, a close examination of dates shows that some staff worked for a period of time without a Disclosure and Barring Service check being obtained. The registered manager explained the safeguarding strategies that were put in place to ensure young people's safety under the circumstances, such as these staff never working alone with a young person. However, the related risk assessments and safety plans were not recorded.

Leaders and managers ensure that young people's files are maintained to a high quality. However, some other records are not maintained as required. This includes the record of admissions and discharges from the home and the central record of physical interventions. The management oversight of these records is weak.

Staff talk positively about their place of work. They meet individually, and as a team, with the registered manager to discuss their practices and young people's progress. All staff spoken to said that the psychotherapist's contribution to the team meetings is particularly helpful.

The professionals and parents speak highly about the home and the quality of support that it provides to young people. Staff do not give up on young people despite the complexity of their needs and at times slow progress.

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 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; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; 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)(b)(c)(h))	01/07/2020
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; and	01/07/2020

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)(3)(a)(b)(c)(d))	
For the purposes of the requirement in paragraph (3), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 3 Diploma”); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b)(5)(a)(b))	01/07/2020
The registered person may permit an individual to start work at the home despite the fact that the requirement in paragraph (3)(d) has not been met if— the registered person has taken all reasonable steps to obtain full information about each of the matters in Schedule 2 in respect of the individual, but the enquiries in relation to any of the matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2 are incomplete; full and satisfactory information in respect of the individual has been obtained in relation to the matters in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 2; the registered person considers that the circumstances are exceptional; and the registered person ensures that the individual is appropriately supervised while carrying out the individual’s duties, pending receipt of any outstanding information on the	01/07/2020

matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2, which is then considered satisfactory by the registered person. The registered person must take reasonable steps to ensure that any individual who is working at the home and who does not fall within paragraph (2)(a) and (b) is appropriately supervised while carrying out the individual's duties. (Regulation 32 (7)(a)(b)(c)(d)(8))	
The registered person must operate a disciplinary procedure which, in particular— provides for the suspension from work of an employee if necessary in the interests of the safety or welfare of children; and provides that the failure on the part of an employee to report an incident of abuse, or suspected abuse, whether past or present, in relation to a child to the appropriate person is a ground on which disciplinary proceedings may be instituted. (Regulation 33 (1)(2)(a)(b))	01/07/2020
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and	01/07/2020

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; 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; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))	
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; ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)) This requirement relates in particular to keeping the register of children as described in Schedule 4.1.	01/07/2020

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: 2548334

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Oak House Children's Home Limited

Registered provider address: A B C Care Solutions, 249 Cranbrook Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 4TG

Responsible individual: Saheena Saeed

Registered manager: Mwansa Bwalya

Inspector

Seka Graovac, Social Care Inspector

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