

2559317

Registered provider: Omega Care Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a private provider. It is registered to care for one child who may experience social or emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2022.

Due to COVID-19, 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 20 October to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2022

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	inadequate
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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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not previously inspected		

Inspection judgements

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

The child currently living in the home says he likes the staff and feels that they listen to him. He enjoys a range of activities of his choice and can see his friends.

The staff have worked hard to form relationships with the child's family so that he receives consistent messages from everyone around him. The staff support the child to have regular video calls with family members.

The staff advocate for children about their education. The child living in the home is now attending mainstream school in line with his wishes and feelings. The team works closely with the school to promote increased hours of attendance. The staff engage children in informal education when no formal arrangements are in place. However, the manager has not always escalated concerns when children do not have an identified education provider or when education documents are not provided.

The manager and staff are not aware of the local offer, which sets out the support available for children with special education needs or disabilities. This is a missed opportunity to access additional resources for children.

Children's views are considered, and their diversity needs are supported. For example, children are supported to attend religious services and youth groups.

The locality of the home is not considered as part of the pre-admission planning process in order to make sure it is a suitable area that meets children's needs. The location review does not consider strategies to minimise risks to children if they move to the home.

Information about children's changing needs and how the staff should support them are not consistent across plans. Children's plans include goals to work towards. However, their progress graphs are not always complete. These make it difficult to understand how children's experiences are improving their outcomes. Some important information, such as allergies, are not included in children's plans.

There are maintenance issues in the home that need to be addressed to make it a pleasant and comfortable place in which to live, such as the replacement of a damaged carpet in the child's bedroom.

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

The staff understand children's risks and vulnerabilities. However, risk assessments and management plans do not identify emerging risks to children's health and safety. Strategies for the staff to follow in response to risks are not always specific to children's presenting behaviours. Children's views on what helps them when they feel upset or unsettled are not always included in the strategies to inform staff practice. Consequently, there have been incidents because staff have not responded well to children's needs.

Children are responding more positively to consistent boundaries, and they listen to the advice that the staff give to them. A child was helped to understand how to keep himself safer so that an order to restrict his liberty is no longer required to keep him safe. The child is less likely to go missing.

Financial reparations are frequently used as consequences for negative behaviours. These are not evaluated over time to see if they help children to improve their behaviour, or whether a different approach is needed.

The staff do not consistently complete direct work with children who use discriminatory language when they are upset. This does not help children to understand socially acceptable behaviour.

Management oversight of physical intervention records does not always identify inconsistencies between reports by different staff members. However, the manager does provide guidance on practice improvements when debriefing the staff involved.

The manager reports any concerns about staff conduct to the designated officer. He ensures that investigations take place and acts so that children are cared for safely, and by adults who understand their needs.

The language used in reports by some members of staff is judgemental. This is not helpful for children if they choose to read their records in order to understand their journey of living at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

A long-term member of staff competently led the inspection without support from senior leaders. She demonstrated a good understanding of children living in the home, both currently and previously.

The members of the staff team say that they feel well supported by the manager daily, as well as during formal supervision. However, some new staff are not receiving fortnightly supervision in accordance with the provider's policy.

The provider has only recently introduced a process to appraise staff practice performance. Some long-standing members of the team have not had any appraisal since the home was registered. Appraisals should be completed at a minimum of once per year to meet regulatory requirements.

The manager and the staff recognise that children need care from a consistent team. The team is now more stable, which is particularly important for the child living at the home. The manager advocates against any changes to the team in order to prevent disruption for the child.

Training records do not clearly demonstrate whether the staff complete and refresh their mandatory training. Furthermore, the workforce plan does not reflect the current team members or identify their professional development and training needs.

Despite a change in independent person, external monitoring of the home remains weak and does not help the manager to drive forward improvements in the home. The manager's review of the quality of care does not currently include the opinions of stakeholders. This is a missed opportunity to gain valuable input about practice in the home.

The statement of purpose is not up to date so as to reflect current staffing arrangements within the company. However, the manager is aware and is making amendments to the document.

The manager has not met all the requirements and recommendations from the assurance visit, and several are therefore repeated.

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 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)) This requirement is repeated.	6 March 2022
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—	6 March 2022

feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; 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)(c)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) This requirement is repeated.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)) This requirement is repeated.	6 March 2022
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (1) (4)(a)(b)) This requirement is repeated.	6 March 2022
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). (Regulation 46 (1)) In particular, the review should consider how any identified risks should be mitigated to ensure that children admitted to the home are safe. It should include details of the local area offer for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.	6 March 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and	6 March 2022

have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))

Specifically, the staff should receive supervision in accordance with the provider's policy and an appraisal at least annually.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the staff challenge poor behaviour, including the use of derogatory language, to help them to understand socially acceptable behaviour. ('Guide to the children's home regulations, including the quality standards, Page 39, paragraph 8.11)
- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint are reviewed to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge, including inconsistencies between recording of different members of staff. ('Guide to the children's home regulations, including the quality standards, page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person should ensure that the staff record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way and avoid using language that implies value judgements about children. ('Guide to the children's home regulations, including the quality standards, page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that there is a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20) and details the required information. It should be kept under review and updated. ('Guide to the children's home regulations, including the quality standards, page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that the home's physical environment is maintained to a high standard to ensure it is a homely and welcoming place to live. ('Guide to the children's home regulations, including the quality standards, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the review of the quality of care considers the opinions of stakeholders as identified in regulation 45. ('Guide to the children's home regulations, including the quality standards, page 64, paragraph 15.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the home's statement of purpose is reviewed and updated to reflect the current workforce. ('Guide to the children's home regulations, including the quality standards, page 14, paragraph 3.5)
- The registered person should ensure that local authorities are challenged to meet children's educational needs when no provision is in place. ('Guide to the children's home regulations, including the quality standards, page 28, paragraph 5.5)

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: 2559317

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Omega Care Group Limited

Registered provider address: 40–42 Kemble Street, Prescot L34 5SQ

Responsible individual: Alekos Aresti

Registered manager: Paul Seddon

Inspector

Karen Willson, Social Care Inspector

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