

2567272

Registered provider: Omega Care Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to three children with social or emotional difficulties.

A new manager is in post, who is yet to apply to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 April 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	requires improvement to be good
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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: 24 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Following an interim inspection on 24 November 2021, three compliance notices were issued under section 22a of the Care Standards Act 2000 in relation to regulation 12 (the protection of children standard), regulation 13 (the leadership and management standard) and regulation 35 (behaviour management policies and records). A restriction of accommodation notice was also served.

A monitoring visit took place on 10 January 2022. The visit concluded that no new children had been accommodated in the home, but that insufficient action had been

taken to meet the steps in the compliance notices. New compliance notices were served in relation to same regulations, and the restriction of accommodation remained in place.

A further monitoring visit took place on 14 February 2022. No new children had been accommodated at the home. Insufficient action had been taken to meet the compliance notices. A further notice to restrict accommodation was served.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/11/2021	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
09/06/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

One child has left the home since the last monitoring visit. No children have moved into the home. The provider has complied with the notice to restrict accommodation of further children in the home.

No clear transition plan was in place for the child who moved. The placement was terminated sooner than planned by the previous manager. No formal review of the placement took place. This is a missed opportunity to identify learning for the team to improve the experiences for any children who may come to live in the home in the future.

Children's records show that specific assessments are required so that children get the right help for their needs. However, the staff were unclear whether assessments had been completed because they had not followed up or challenged delay. This means that children are not receiving additional support promptly to help them to achieve.

Plans still do not fully identify children's needs and how the staff should help children to make progress or track the progress that children are making. The staff do not persistently challenge placing authorities to provide relevant plans to assist in planning children's care.

Communication has improved between the staff and a child's school to ensure that all professionals are working together to help a child to achieve their academic potential. The staff have obtained revision materials from the school to help the child to prepare for their GCSEs. They also use informal approaches to revision through daily activities, such as cooking.

The staff encourage children to pursue their interests. A nutritionist has been employed to help a child to eat well as part of a sports training programme. However, there are no records of the advice provided so that the staff can support the child on a day-to-day basis.

The team working in the home is now more stable and consistent. The staff are building more positive relationships with a child and listen to their wishes and feelings. They are creative in how they approach the child to help them to better manage their feelings, develop greater independence, and to address specific issues and needs.

The staff work with children to support their identity needs. However, they do not always record the work that is carried out. Support available for children elsewhere, such as schools, is not always recorded in their plans.

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

Risk management plans have been streamlined to provide the staff with clear strategies to follow. However, they still do not always consider children's individual learning needs. This means that a child may become overwhelmed by different strategies used by the staff.

The staff now use more consistent boundaries that help children to understand what is expected of them in terms of acceptable behaviour. The staff work with other professionals to help children to understand the consequences of their actions and the potential effect on their future aspirations.

Staff do not always look for children when they go missing from care. Records do not always properly document actions agreed with the placing authority for when children are away from the home without authority.

The responsible individual has recognised shortfalls in on-call management guidance when there are incidents in the home. This is being addressed to ensure that the staff are given appropriate advice and support. Appropriate strategies have now been introduced to support staff to manage specific issues and incidents.

Debriefs of the staff and children involved in physical interventions still do not meet regulation. The previous manager failed to identify shortfalls in recording of restraints. She failed to ensure that staff accessed additional training which she had identified in her management evaluation. The current manager is addressing this with the staff team.

The home's fire risk assessment has not been updated to reflect concerns about children smoking in their bedrooms or making threats to set fire to their home. This does not keep children or other people safe. More positively, the staff are helping the child to stop smoking with the support of health professionals.

Records of room searches do not indicate if children are told why they have taken place. New documents have been introduced to address this shortfall.

Previous managers have explored issues highlighted on Disclosure and Barring Service checks with potential employees, as part of safer recruitment. However, there is no evaluation of the outcome of discussions to identify whether further risk management measures are required for individual staff.

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

The previous manager left before applying to register with Ofsted. A new manager and responsible individual are in post. They have completed a thorough review of

care provided in the home and have identified areas for improvement. New documentation and processes to improve practice are being embedded.

The staff say they now feel more confident in their work and better supported by leaders and managers. The team is becoming more stable and consistent in caring for children. Staff have a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities under the regulatory framework.

New systems are being introduced to ensure that there is regular and evaluative oversight of practice in the home. However, the report of the review of the quality of care does not yet capture the views of children and other stakeholders. Leaders and managers recognise that the changes being implemented are a work in progress to drive improvement in ensuring children's safety and well-being.

The staff either hold or are enrolled on a suitable residential childcare qualification. However, some of the staff have still not completed allocated mandatory training, including food hygiene and fire awareness. This potentially compromises the safety and well-being of children and others.

Supervision is now taking place regularly, which enables the staff to reflect on their practice and identify their professional development needs with their supervisor. Performance is monitored and addressed where necessary.

The local authority designated officer confirmed that the manager maintains good communication and is compliant when acting in response to allegations made by a child.

The quality of external monitoring remains poor, despite a change in the independent person completing visits. The responsible individual is taking steps to address the shortfall.

The provider has demonstrated sufficient improvement to satisfy the regulator that the restriction of accommodation is no longer required to keep children safe.

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 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 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; 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)(f)(h)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that the staff team has the necessary training and skills to keep children safe and meet their needs. Staff should have a clear understanding of processes and recording systems for how they support children's outcomes. Robust monitoring and review systems should be used to identify and improve practice to support children's progress.	5 June 2022
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	5 June 2022

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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(v)(b)) Specifically, individual risk management plans should be tailored to each child’s needs and risks, with clear strategies that consider children’s individual needs. Staff should be skilled in responding to risks to children’s safety, including following protocols to look for children when they go missing from care. The home’s fire safety risk assessment should be updated to ensure the safety of all who live and work at the home.	
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;	5 June 2022

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; 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)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) This particularly refers to records containing accurate information about the methods and duration of measures used. Records of debriefs should be completed with the staff involved and by someone independent of the incident. Children should be spoken to about the measure.	
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. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b) (5)) Specifically, the report should clearly analyse and evaluate the care provided, with a clear opinion about children's safety and how their well-being is supported. The report should enable the provider and the regulator to have a clear	5 June 2022

overview of the care provided in the home and identify areas for development.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child’s placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iii) Specifically, children’s plans should be kept up to date and reflect how the staff are to support their individual needs effectively. Children moving from the home should have clear transition plans in place. Where children’s placements end prematurely, this should be evaluated and learning should be identified to drive improvement.	5 June 2022
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child’s needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority’s or a relevant person’s performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child’s needs are met in accordance with the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (b)(c)) In particular, the provider should liaise with and, where necessary, challenge other professionals to ensure that children receive the input and services required for them to fulfil their potential. This includes ensuring that diagnostic	5 June 2022

tests are carried out and that outcomes are recorded on children's records.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) Specifically, records should be kept of work undertaken with children that helps them to make progress in different aspects of their lives. Clear records should be kept when children go missing from care and include what actions are taken by the staff in the child's absence. Plans created by the placing authority should be held in children's records.	5 June 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the staff understand and provide care according to the model outlined in the home's statement of purpose in supporting children's well-being. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the review of the quality of care considers the children's experiences and how the care provided impacts on their outcomes. The opinions of children and other stakeholders should be included as part of this review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 16.2)
- The registered person should ensure that recruitment checks minimise any risks to children's safety as part of good employment practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 2567272

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Omega Care Group Limited

Registered provider address: 40 to 42 Kemble Street, Prescott L34 5SQ

Responsible individual: Caron Lackenby

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Karen Willson, Social Care Inspector

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