

2567272

Registered provider: Omega Care Group Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately operated. It is registered to care for up to three children with social or emotional difficulties.

A new manager is in post who is not yet registered.

Inspection date: 14 February 2022

This monitoring visit

Ofsted previously visited this home and issued compliance notices and a notice to restrict accommodation.

A monitoring visit took place on 10 January 2022. The purpose of the visit was to monitor the actions taken by the provider to meet the steps in three compliance notices and to monitor the restriction of accommodation. 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 notices were issued under section 22A of the Care Standards Act 2000. These were 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. The restriction of accommodation remained in place. Two children remained living in the home.

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the actions taken by the provider to meet the steps in three compliance notices and to confirm that no new children had been accommodated at the home.

The provider has not taken sufficient action to meet the notices. Some serious concerns remain in relation to safeguarding practice, leadership and management, and the recording and reporting of physical intervention practice.

Safeguarding incidents continue to be poorly managed. During the night prior to this visit, an unknown male was able to remain in a child's bedroom overnight, without the knowledge of staff. Managers and staff failed to follow all safeguarding procedures when this information became known, including conducting a room search. This fails to demonstrate that incidents are responded to appropriately to keep children safe.

There is limited support being offered to a child who is at risk of criminal exploitation. There are continuing concerns about the child's involvement in drug-related activities and her friendships with older unknown males. Staff are not taking the necessary actions to consistently safeguard this child.

Children's risk assessments and behaviour management plans have been reviewed. However, they are not kept up to date after serious incidents, and they do not include accurate information about the strategies currently being used to support children. Poor-quality risk assessments mean that staff are not provided with clear guidance about how to manage existing and emerging risks to children.

The quality of record-keeping is inconsistent and does not clearly document events in the home or provide clear information to staff about the children living there. For example, risk management plans are not updated, missing-from-care documents are not available and staff rotas do not provide a clear record of who works in the home at any given time. A requirement is made to address the shortfall in rotas.

Physical intervention practice is not safely supporting children who are experiencing crisis in their lives. The interim manager told inspectors that children have been held and moved by staff. However, these incidents have not been recorded in line with policies and procedures and have not been recorded as physical interventions. This is a breach of regulations and does not effectively or adequately safeguard children. Records that document physical interventions were not provided to the inspector, despite several requests to the interim manager. It is concerning that records are not readily available, as this does not support effective monitoring and oversight of practice, and it does not enable the regulator to have oversight of care practice in the home.

It remains unclear from the records available at inspection whether members of the staff team have undertaken all mandatory training. The interim manager provided information to indicate that some staff have attended training sessions, but the rotas demonstrated that staff were not on shift at that time. The training matrix provided further conflicting information about the attendees at those training sessions. This does not demonstrate that all staff have attended relevant training to develop their skills and knowledge to safely care for children.

The provider has recently recruited a new manager for the service who has not yet submitted an application to Ofsted for registration. The interim manager plans to strengthen accountability through improving the recording systems and the

monitoring and evaluation systems. However, these proposed changes are not implemented or embedded into practice.

There is an insufficient number of experienced and skilled staff working in the home. This is due to staff vacancies and sickness. There is a high number of new and inexperienced staff who do not have the skills, knowledge or experience to understand or effectively manage the complex, challenging and high-risk behaviour of the children in the home. Leaders and managers are failing to equip staff to manage children's needs safely and effectively.

Supervision of the staff is still not taking place in accordance with the provider's policy and so does not provide effective oversight of practice in the home. Some supervision records show that staff were not on shift at the time of their recorded supervision sessions. Furthermore, records lack detail of the discussion and do not demonstrate that supervision aims to provide accountability for both the supervisor and the person receiving supervision by exploring practice and performance. It also does not provide additional evidence for annual performance management and review.

Leaders and managers have failed to utilise monitoring and auditing measures to safely manage and oversee practice in the home. Leaders and managers are not identifying and addressing shortfalls in staff practice to improve the quality of care being provided. This has negatively affected the outcomes and progress of children and compromises their safety and well-being.

Ofsted reasonably believes a child may be at risk of harm if it allows further admissions to the home. Therefore, Ofsted has made the decision to serve a further notice restricting accommodation at the home. This will ensure children are safeguarded while allowing time for the company to address the continued shortfalls identified.

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

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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and	13 February 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)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that members of the staff team understand the model of care set out in the home's statement of purpose and that they 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 that includes children's views. Children should receive consistent care from a stable, skilled staff team.	
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; 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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and 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)(iii)(v)(vi)(b))	13 February 2022

Specifically, individual risk assessments should be bespoke to each child's needs and risks. Plans should demonstrate how the staff help children become safer. They should be accessible to guide practice in the home. Staff should be skilled in responding to risks to children's safety.	
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; 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 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)(ii)(c)) This particularly refers to records containing accurate information about methods and duration of measures used. Record of debriefs should be completed with the child, and	13 February 2022

records should indicate if the child declines the opportunity to discuss the measure.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e)) Specifically, all incidents that present a clear risk to children's safety should be notified promptly.	13 February 2022
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. 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 (2)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)) Specifically, the report should clearly analyse and evaluate the care provided so that the provider and the regulator have a clear overview of care provided in the home. Children's bedrooms should be seen as part of the visit. The independent person should recommend actions to improve the quality of care and escalate any concerns where the manager does not respond to recommended actions.	13 February 2022

The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review (“the quality of care review report”). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that monitoring systems are in place and that the quality of care is reviewed and reported within timescales. The report should include input from stakeholders.	13 February 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees—	13 February 2022

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff receive reflective supervision in line with the provider's policy to support their practice. Staff should receive supervision from an individual who has oversight of practice in the home.	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular, the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)(c)) Specifically, records of administration should be clear and follow dispensing advice. Any recording should clearly identify the individual completing the record and the reason for any error.	13 February 2022
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and	13 February 2022

to prepare for future care, education or employment. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(ix)) In particular, the staff should take appropriate action to support children to engage in education, training or employment to maximise their future opportunities and to help them to overcome barriers to do so.	
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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)) Specifically, children's plans should be kept up to date and reflect how the staff are to support their individual needs effectively.	13 February 2022
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in	13 February 2022

the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)) In particular, children's views on how the staff can help them should be incorporated into their plans.	
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. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)) The provider needs to demonstrate at all hours that all staff have worked on rotas, including the registered manager. The provider must ensure that their admission and discharge book is filled in.	13 March 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that systems are in place so that pre-admission planning fully considers a child's assessed needs and the impact on children already living in the home prior to offering a placement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff maintain clear, detailed records of work undertaken with children to support their progress. Records should be easily accessible so that children and other stakeholders understand their journey while living in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that maintenance in the home is completed promptly to ensure that the children live in a home that is kept to a high standard of decoration, taking into account their views. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2567272

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Omega Care Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Alekos Aresti

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Michelle Edge, Social Care Inspection Manager

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