

2567272

Registered provider: Omega Care Group Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private provider and is registered to provide care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The interim manager has been in post since June 2021. He has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 24 November 2021

Date of last inspection: 9 June 2021

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judged that it has declined in effectiveness.

Poor practice relating to care planning, safeguarding and risk management and the leadership and management of the home are having a significant and detrimental impact on the children's safety, welfare and progress.

Risk management is poor and ineffective and puts children's safety at risk. Records do not reflect the levels of risk for children when they are increasing, particularly in relation to substance misuse and exploitation. Risk assessments and management plans, stored in various locations, are contradictory, making it difficult for the staff to understand children's current risks and respond to them appropriately. Records do not indicate how the staff work with children to help them understand their risks and how to become safer.

Children's care plans are not reviewed and updated regularly to reflect children's current needs or to track their progress. The staff lack guidance on specific strategies to support children to make progress. Children's views about how the staff can help them are not included in their plans. They are not always consulted at the appropriate time. As a result, incidents occur when children become anxious and frustrated because the staff do not respond in ways that recognise their individual needs. This increases children's risk of criminalisation.

One child is accessing education and making progress. Other children are not being helped to understand the importance of education, training or employment to their future opportunities or to overcome barriers to learning.

Children are still smoking and using illegal substances. They are not engaging in specialist services and records do not show whether the staff are providing advice and support. This means that children's health outcomes are not improving.

Some medication is not administered according to prescribing guidance. A lack of management monitoring means that errors in medication administration are not identified or addressed.

Management oversight fails to identify shortfalls. Records of physical interventions contain conflicting information and still do not show if debriefs were undertaken with the staff and children involved. Furthermore, there is no management evaluation of the effectiveness of measures used.

The interim manager has not notified Ofsted about significant safeguarding concerns. This limits the regulator's understanding of safeguarding issues in the home and how they are being managed.

There has been significant turnover in staff and over-reliance on bank and agency staff to provide care for children. This lack of stability in the core staff team does not provide consistency for children.

Staff have not been trained to meet the individual needs of children. Supervision is not taking place for all staff at the frequency stated in the provider's policy. Some supervision is being conducted by an individual who does not have management oversight of the home or the practice of team members. Records do not indicate that team meetings are taking place regularly. Therefore, there are insufficient opportunities for the staff to reflect on practice and identify strategies to support children.

The interim manager has not yet reviewed pre-admission planning processes to ensure that the home is appropriate for future children being considered. The home environment is not maintained to a high standard.

The registered provider and interim manager have failed to meet any of the requirements and recommendations made at the full inspection. The interim manager does not have his own monitoring and review systems in place to review practice and children's outcomes. This indicates poor leadership and a lack of a proactive response to ensure improvements are made for children's safety and quality of care.

Independent external monitoring remains poor and lacks sufficient analysis of practice in the home, despite a new independent person being commissioned. The manager's report on the review of the quality of care does not include any input from stakeholders about the care that children receive. This hinders understanding of how practice can be improved to benefit children's experiences of living in the home.

As a result of the significant shortfalls identified, three compliance notices were served, under regulation 12, the protection of children standard, regulation 13, the leadership and management standard, and regulation 35, in relation to behaviour management policies and records. A notice to restrict accommodation at the home was also served to enable the registered provider to rectify the shortfalls.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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	9 January 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 the staff team understands 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, that include children's views, should be used to identify and improve practice to support children's progress. Children should receive consistent care from a stable, skilled staff team. This requirement is repeated.	
*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))	9 January 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. This requirement is repeated.	
*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 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))	9 January 2022

This particularly refers to records containing accurate information about methods and duration of measures used. Record of debriefs should be completed with the staff involved and with the child. This requirement is repeated.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any 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. This requirement is repeated.	9 January 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 regulator has a clear overview of care provided in the home. Children's bedrooms should be	9 January 2022

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. This requirement is repeated.	
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	9 January 2022

is reviewed and reported upon within required timescales. The report should include input from stakeholders. This requirement is repeated.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) In particular, 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. This requirement is repeated.	9 January 2022
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.	9 January 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;	9 January 2022

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 to prepare for future care, education or employment. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(ix)) In particular, that the staff 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.	9 January 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.	9 January 2022

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 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, that children's views on how the staff can help them should be incorporated into their plans.

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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 children's journeys 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 the maintenance in the home should be completed promptly to ensure that the children live in a home that is kept to a high standard of decoration, and that children's views are taken into account. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Information about this inspection

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full 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: Castle Chambers, 43 Castle Street, Liverpool L2 9TL

Responsible individual: Alekos Aresti

Registered manager: Michael Duckworth

Inspectors

Karen Willson, Social Care Inspector

Mark Woodbridge, Social Care Inspector

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