

2571031

Registered provider: Onextra Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private organisation. The home is registered to provide care for up to two children who may have emotional and/or social difficulties.

The home and the manager were registered by Ofsted in May 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), 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 1 and 2 October 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 May 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

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: inadequate

Two children were living at the home at the time of this inspection although one child was missing from the home.

Children's overall experiences and progress have been significantly affected because of the inadequate support and care provided by an inexperienced and inconsistent staff team. Leaders and managers have failed to employ a permanent, stable staff team but have taken steps to address the reasons for this instability.

A high turnover of staff means that children have not experienced continuity of care. A child said that as a result of changes to the staff team, they felt that staff did not care about them. The responsible individual and registered manager have failed to provide children with the continuity of care that they need to be able to build meaningful relationships with staff and have a sense of belonging.

Children are not receiving effectively planned care. Staff do not work consistently as a team. Boundaries and routines are not followed through by staff, for example around the use of the internet or access to gaming equipment in the home. A lack of consistency from the staff team has led to children becoming upset and agitated, resulting in significant incidents. One significant incident led to a child being arrested and taken into police custody, as staff were unable to support and manage the child's behaviour safely.

Children with a history of disrupted education are admitted to the home without agreed plans to meet their educational needs. As a result, some children are at the home for extended periods of time without any educational provision. The lack of provision for meeting children's education needs is not escalated with the placing authority. The delay in identifying suitable education provision undermines children's ability to reintegrate into education settings and gain the relevant skills and qualifications to support future training or employment.

Children's complaints about the home are not always responded to appropriately. For example, one child wrote a complaint that contained inappropriate language. The registered manager refused to deal with the complaint due to the nature of the language used and consequently the child's views and concerns were not addressed.

Children's views are not evidenced in their records. Records are not written in a child-focused way, which means that children's thoughts and wishes are not well represented.

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

Safeguarding arrangements at the home do not sufficiently help children or protect them from harm.

Inspectors found shortfalls in risk management plans. Significant risks relating to one child when in the community have not been addressed. The registered manager has not identified effective control measures to help staff manage these risks, both in the home and in the community.

The registered manager and staff have failed to recognise risks to children's safety and well-being. For example, a child who is at high risk of criminal exploitation was taken to an unknown address and left there without staff conducting proper checks. This placed the child at potential risk in the community.

The registered manager failed to challenge the placing authority and escalate concerns about them omitting to tell them about significant information regarding a child, once it became known. As a result, steps were not taken to review the child's care plan or address the lack of transparency about the child's alleged previous behaviours, as they were not shared as part of the pre-admission information. As a result, other children were potentially placed at risk of harm.

Managers' oversight of risk management in the home is poor. For example, one child's risk management plan includes supervised time in the community. This strategy is contrary to the child's placement plan, which states that the child can have unsupervised time in the community. This means that strategies in place for staff to follow in order to safeguard children are contradictory and give mixed messages to them and the child.

Staff do not have the skills to deliver care as outlined in the statement of purpose. The statement of purpose states that the home will admit children with autism spectrum disorder, oppositional defiance disorder, attention deficit disorder and complex associated difficulties. However, the registered manager has not ensured that members of the staff team have the relevant training before children, who may need this level of care, move into the home. Currently, staff do not have the in-depth knowledge, skills and confidence needed to care for the child currently living in the home safely.

One child had his belongings packed by staff while the child was at the police station, as staff believed immediate notice was going to be served. This was later retracted, and the child returned home; however, his suitcase remained packed. Staff did not recognise the emotional impact this would have on the child.

The home environment is poor, and actions are not always taken in a timely manner to address this. One child's wardrobe was not replaced after it was damaged, and children's bedrooms are not clean. The lack of a homely environment fails to promote the safety, health and well-being of children.

External doors to the home are locked by a key at night. Staff have this key on their person, which means that children's movement in the home is restricted at night. Therefore, they would be unable to leave the home independently, including in the event of a fire.

When children go missing from home, staff do not routinely search for them in the community. The registered manager has failed to ensure that placing authorities offer children an independent return home interview after they have returned from being missing. The opportunity to gain further information about the time when they were missing, which could reduce these incidents or keep children safe, is lost.

Medication records revealed that there have been errors administering medication, which the registered manager was unaware of. Children may not have received medication, as the records are incomplete and lack management oversight and investigation into the errors. Failing to administer medicines correctly means that children's health is compromised.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager's leadership of the home is ineffective. This is the manager's first registered manager position. Her ability to develop her role as registered manager has been undermined, as she has taken on much of the day-to-day care that should be delegated to her staff team. The resulting lack of capacity for the registered manager to develop strong leadership and management skills has not been addressed by the organisation.

The registered manager is committed to the children and demonstrates some awareness of how to positively support the children in her care. However, she has not been able to evidence that she can fulfil her role and provide strong leadership and management for the staff team.

The inspectors identified significant weaknesses in management oversight of the home. The registered manager has monitoring systems in place. However, these are in their infancy and there is no evidence that these systems have contributed to improvements in the care of children.

Children are admitted to the home despite pre-admission risk assessments identifying that the staff team does not have the relevant skills and training to support the individual needs of the children. Leaders and managers have failed to act on their own impact risk assessments regarding potential placement matches. As a result, three children have left the home in an unplanned way.

Leadership and management of the home are poor and inconsistent. There is a lack of clarity in the distinction between the registered manager's and responsible individual's roles and responsibilities. As a result, the registered manager's leadership of the home is further diminished. For example, the registered manager and responsible individual have differing views on serving notice on placements. This has led to confusion for children and staff.

Since the assurance visit on 1 October 2020, nine new staff have commenced employment in the home and eight staff have left. The registered manager is the only member of staff remaining in the home. A number of staff have only worked at the home for a short period of time. As a result, staff with little or no experience have not had the opportunity to gain the skills needed to fulfil their roles effectively.

The culture of the staff team is not conducive to creating an environment where good-quality care can flourish. This impacts on the well-being of children. Formal supervision of staff is not child-centred. Staff are not being provided with opportunities during supervision meetings to be reflective on their practice and how they can contribute to the progress of children. Staff are not receiving professional support and challenge from managers in supervision that helps them to understand and promote the needs of children.

Following the assurance visit, a requirement was made regarding the statement of purpose. This inspection found that the provider had not taken steps to meet the requirement and this is restated.

As a result of this inspection, Ofsted has issued a notice restricting accommodation at the home. This notice and the compliance notices will be reviewed at a further monitoring visit and full inspection.

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 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that— ■ there are sufficient experienced staff who are suitability trained, understand their roles and responsibilities and work as a cohesive team to care for children safely	18 July 2021

■ the registered manager has the capacity to undertake her role and fulfil her leadership and management obligations ■ the rota is a balance of experienced and inexperienced staff ■ the registered manager has improved oversight and understanding of the quality of care that children experience and the impact this has on their progress.	
*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; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health. 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)(iii)(v)(b)(d)) This refers specifically to ensuring that— ■ risk management plans address all known risks and include clear strategies and actions for staff to follow ■ staff have the skills and training to be able to identify safeguarding risks to children	23 June 2021

■ staff understand children’s risk management plans and their roles and responsibilities in protecting children ■ staff provide a consistent approach in their care ■ improvements and repairs are addressed swiftly in the home ■ thumb turn locks are fitted to external doors.	
*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 children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e)(i)(f)) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that— ■ children’s needs are clearly identified and assessed prior to admission ■ the skills of staff can meet the needs of children admitted to the home ■ concerns are escalated regarding the risk a child may present with the relevant placing authority without delay ■ children are supported to contribute to their records in a way that is appropriate for their age and understanding ■ children are supported to leave the home in a planned and positive manner.	18 July 2021
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.	30 July 2021

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose; protect and promote each child’s welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that— ■ staff understand the statement of purpose ■ the staff team demonstrates an understanding of children’s needs and has sufficient skills to support children in the home.	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans; 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 (a)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered manager should escalate concerns to the placing local authority if arrangements are not in place for a child’s education.	30 July 2021
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children’s home.	30 July 2021

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, that there are systems in place to monitor the recording of administration of medication which minimises the risk of errors occurring.	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the missing child policy") setting out— the steps taken, and to be taken, to prevent children from being absent without permission; and the procedures to be followed, and the roles and responsibilities of persons working at the home, in relation to a child who is, or has been, so absent. Before implementing, or making an amendment which the registered person considers to be substantive to, the missing child policy, the registered person must— consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person; and have regard to any relevant local authority or police protocols on missing children. (Regulation 34 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b)) Specifically: ■ that information contained in missing-from-care plans is consistent with the information contained in other assessments and plans ■ that staff are proactive in searching for children when they are missing and that return home interviews are arranged for each child.	30 July 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	30 July 2021

Specifically, that supervision is child-centred and focuses on staff's ability to understand and meet the needs of each child.	
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. If a home has a website, the registered person must ensure that a copy of the statement of purpose is published on that website unless the registered person considers that such publication would prejudice the welfare of children in the home. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b) (4)) In particular: ■ the registered manager should keep the statement of purpose up to date ■ Ofsted should be notified of any changes to the statement of purpose ■ the statement of purpose should be uploaded to the organisational website.	30 June 2021
The registered person must— establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (1)(3)) in particular, the registered manager must follow the complaints procedure for all complaints made by or on behalf of children.	30 July 2021

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2571031

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Onextra Care Limited

Registered provider address: 443 Houldsworth Business and Arts Centre,
Houldsworth street, Stockport SK5 6DA

Responsible individual: Lee Isherwood

Registered manager: Yolanda McInnes

Inspectors

Dawn Parton, Social Care Inspector
Genevieve O'Reilly, Social Care Inspector

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