

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 small private organisation. It provides care for two children who may have emotional and/or social difficulties. One child was being cared for at the home at the time of this inspection.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in December 2021. He is suitably qualified and experienced.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 April 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 July 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/05/2021	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The child being cared for benefits from nurturing care which is informed by a good understanding of her individual needs. The child has begun to develop trusting and secure relationships with the small team of adults who are looking after her. As a result, her experience of living at the home is positive and she is making progress.

The child had a well-planned move to the home. Before moving into the home, she was able to visit the house and meet with staff. A child-centred children's guide and welcome information pack helped her to develop a good understanding of life at the home and supported her to understand her rights as a child living in the home.

Staff support the child to maintain important links with her community by taking her to spend time with friends and family. In addition, her friends have been on days out with staff during school holidays and they visit the home for meals. The inclusion of her friends in the life of the home provides the child with an experience of positive family life. It strengthens the relationship between the child and the adults caring for her.

Staff make sensible and age-appropriate decisions about the child's activities outside of the home, in consultation with her social worker. She has recently attended an under-18 music event at a club with her friends and has plans to repeat this later in the year. This gives her an appropriate amount of freedom. She is supported to have the same positive experiences as her friends and gain independence skills in a planned and supported way.

The child has maintained her place at her school in her home community and staff ensure that she gets to and from school safely each day. Staff are strong advocates for her in school and are committed to ensuring that she is able to complete the rest of her secondary education in this setting. Staff are in daily communication with school and are proactive in their relationship with school staff. The child has clear aspirations for her future career and staff are supporting her to gain the qualifications she needs to pursue this.

All relevant services are in place to support the child. Staff have worked alongside other professionals, including complex safeguarding workers and sexual health staff, to ensure that the child is safe and supported. Due to the progress she has made, the child is no longer involved with the complex safeguarding team, as staff have the skills and knowledge to support her effectively. Staff have worked alongside the child to address her uncertainty about attending the dentist for treatment. With the support of staff and a local dentist, she has now been able to receive overdue treatment. This demonstrates the progress the child is making with the help of trusted adults.

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

Risks to the child, particularly when in the community, have reduced since she has been living at the home. Staff have a good understanding of risk and this is supported by clear written assessments which identify patterns and trends. Plans to reduce risk provide staff with clear actions to follow and this supports them to keep the child safe.

When the child goes missing from the home, or does not return home at the agreed time, staff are proactive in looking for her to support her to return home safely. Staff have a good understanding of her network of friends and this helps them to make informed decisions about how to respond in these instances. There has been a reduction in these incidents of going missing as the child has become more settled at the home.

Staff have a good understanding about safeguarding issues and thresholds for information-sharing. They are actively involved in multi-agency strategy meetings and care planning discussions. They ensure that they have all the information they need to care for the child appropriately.

Sanctions and rewards are used consistently in the home to promote and celebrate positive behaviours and achievements. The child is regularly consulted about rewards and incentives and is involved in developing her own goals to work towards. Sanctions are used infrequently, but when imposed they are appropriate. However, when activities are withdrawn or postponed as a sanction, the child's written records do not always make the duration of this clear. In addition, handwritten records are not always legible. This means that some practice lacks transparency and accountability.

The child has not experienced any physical intervention from staff or any searches of her room to date. As a result, she is living in an environment which provides her with a sense of security and safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of leadership and management, which is now a strength of the home. Following a period of instability in both the responsible individual and registered manager positions, these roles are now filled by people with the skills and knowledge to make the required improvements identified at previous inspections.

The new registered manager has high aspirations for the home and is driving the improvements that have been made to the quality of care the home provides. He has clear and effective systems in place to monitor and evaluate the practice of staff and the progress of the child. His oversight is evident in care records. The registered manager's creativity and his passion to deliver high-quality care to the child and make a positive difference to her life, shine through.

The child's care records are comprehensive and reflect the work staff undertake to support her. Records are clear and the child is able to comment on her records or add to them should she wish to do so. The staff team has a good understanding of the child's care plans. Written records show how they are working to meet the goals identified. The quality of this written information provides the child with a good understanding of her experiences at the home and the progress she has made. This is supported by the ongoing collation by staff of photos and memorabilia to provide the child with lasting memories.

The registered manager ensures that pre-admission assessments and planning are thorough. Decisions to admit children are only made after collation and consideration of all relevant information. The needs of the child currently being cared for at the home are paramount in decision-making about welcoming a second child into the home. This means that the progress made by the child, and her safety and stability, are not adversely affected. Additionally, she is involved in decision-making about her home.

There have been a number of changes to the staff team in the reporting period. New staff have recently been recruited. There has been no use of agency staff during this period. The registered manager has undertaken shifts when required, to ensure that there has been continuity of care for the child. The registered manager is supported by an experienced and long-standing deputy manager who has provided consistency and stability during a challenging time.

New staff have a good induction to the home and regular supervision which supports their development. All staff have frequent formal supervision as well as regular informal support from the registered manager and deputy manager. Regular team meetings also support staff to reflect on practice and understand their roles and responsibilities. A culture of learning and continuous improvement is developing in the home.

The registered manager has good relationships with key people and services external to the home. Stakeholder feedback about the home and the quality of care is good. The registered manager works assertively and constructively with other professionals to make sure that children living in the home have the resources and support they need to flourish.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all written information is legible. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The registered person should ensure that when activities are withdrawn or postponed as a sanction, children are provided in writing with clear timescales for the duration of the sanction. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.13)

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 & Arts Centre,
Houldsworth Street, Stockport SK5 6DA

Responsible individual: Warren Lewin

Registered manager: Michael Aston

Inspector

Dawn Parton, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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M1 2WD

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