

2599183

Registered provider: Omega Care Group Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This private children's home is registered to care for up to three children who can no longer live at home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2021.

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	inadequate
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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: 20 January 2022

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
20/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

Good transition plans show how children are supported to move in and out of the home. Two children viewed several other children's homes before choosing this one. However, one child was admitted without the child's local authority care plan and placement plan. This does not ensure that the staff have the most relevant information to care for the child well. The manager received these plans on the morning of the inspection.

Children say that they feel happy and safe at this home. They speak about the good relationships that they have with each other and the staff team. The children can identify several members of staff who they can talk to if they have a concern. One child said, 'It is great. Staff really listen and help when they can.' The inspector viewed positive interactions between children and staff throughout the visit.

Two social workers were complimentary about the care that the children received at this home. One social worker said, 'She [the child] has settled extremely well. We did not think she would. This is down to the staff's approach.'

Children's attendance at school is sporadic. The manager is working closely with numerous educational professionals to identify more appropriate educational provisions. When children refuse to attend school, staff help the children to engage in home learning. The staff have the necessary educational documents for the children. However, some information has not been taken from these documents to update the home's education plan. For example, there is no information about the children's academic level.

Children have good access to a range of health services. For example, they receive extra support from external mental health professionals to help them with their emotions. When children are waiting for external support, staff have helped them by exploring and buying sensory items such as fidgets, elastic bands and journals. However, there is no information about this in their health plans. Therefore, there is no information about whether these items are helping the children.

The contact children have with their friends and family is important to them, and the manager and staff work hard to promote this. The manager and staff have liaised effectively with placing local authorities and parents to allow the children to have unsupervised contact with parents and friends. The staff ensure that contact is meaningful and safe and is always in the best interests of the children.

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

Children say that they feel safe, and that staff do their very best to safeguard them, including teaching them about risky or unsafe choices, such as being out in the local community with their friends. One child said, 'We know how important it is to check in with staff.'

There is an ongoing external investigation into a safeguarding issue raised by a child. Staff did not follow all safeguarding procedures, such as informing the emergency duty team. In the interim, staff have received extra safeguarding training and have had discussions in team meetings and in supervisions. Two staff confidently discussed their roles and responsibilities in protecting children with the inspector. However, the requirement given at the last inspection has been repeated to ensure that this learning is embedded into practice.

Children's risk assessments and behaviour management plans highlight all known risks that are recorded in children's local authority documents. Staff know what the agreed strategies are to de-escalate situations, and there is clear guidance for staff to follow if an incident occurs. This means that staff are consistent in their approach to children.

Children have been reported missing from this home. Staff search the local area and continually ring children on their mobile phones to try to find them. Return home interviews are completed by an independent person. As a result, children have someone independent to talk to and they can share any concerns they may have. Consequently, some children have significantly reduced their missing-from-home episodes.

Children say that any sanction given for unacceptable behaviour is fair because staff discuss the sanction with them. However, the home's recording of the sanction is not clear. For example, there is no information about what led up to the behaviour, how staff tried to diffuse the situation, what the time limit was for the sanction or whether the sanction was effective. Therefore, the manager cannot evaluate whether the sanction used is proportionate, fair and effective.

Recruitment procedures are not robust. Currently, safeguarding checks are completed by people in the company's head office. There is no information as to whether they have been trained in safer recruitment policies and procedures. When potential staff are recruited, references are verified and an enhanced criminal check is completed. When more information is required, a risk assessment is completed. However, this is a tick-box answer to pre-set questions. No further information is recorded. For example, if a person was disciplined for conduct issues from a previous employment, there is no explanation about the issue or the findings. This does not ensure that children are protected from unsuitable adults.

Health and safety checks are completed regularly. Fire evacuations are completed monthly, but the records do not show who was present. Therefore, it is unclear whether all children and staff have taken part in a fire drill.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2021. She is currently completing her leadership and management award. She is supported by a qualified and experienced deputy manager.

Most of the staff have a relevant childcare qualification. This means that children are cared for by a qualified, experienced and well-trained staff team. However, the manager and staff have not received regular supervision. This does not ensure that they are given the opportunity to reflect on their practice.

There has been a period of instability at the home due to staff being moved across the company. The manager successfully challenged the senior management team, and staff is now stable.

There has been poor oversight of a safeguarding incident by senior leaders and management. For example, there have been two safeguarding meetings that the manager was unable to attend due to being on annual leave. Senior leaders did not nominate a representative to attend these meetings. As a result, two different people attended who had little knowledge of the incident. This practice prevents relevant safeguarding agencies from having a clear understanding of how children are safeguarded.

The external monitoring is ineffective because the independent visitor has not highlighted the shortfalls within their report to the manager. As a result, the manager has not been able to address and take quick action to remedy these issues. Further to this, the independent visitor does not give their opinion on whether children are effectively safeguarded or whether the children's well-being is promoted in the home. In addition to this, the manager has not used consultation with children, their parents, staff or stakeholders to inform her internal monitoring of the home.

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 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— 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 are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vi)(vii)) Specifically, ensure that there is continuous learning and monitoring of staff's understanding around safeguarding procedures.	30 June 2022
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— 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)(f))	30 June 2022

Specifically, the leadership and management team must have good oversight of the home.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c)) Specifically, ensure that the home has the children’s local authority care plan and placement plan.	30 June 2022
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— ensure, by the means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(d))	30 June 2022
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;	30 June 2022

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result 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)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d))	30 June 2022

The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— 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 (1)(2)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))	30 June 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. 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) (5))	30 June 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff receive regular supervision. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have the knowledge to understand each child's education targets and academic level. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 27, paragraph 5.11)
- The registered person should ensure that the advice, support and guidance given to children around their emotional health is recorded in their health plan. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)

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: 2599183

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Omega Care Group Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Caron Lackenby

Registered manager: Nia Roscoe

Inspector

Pam Nuckley, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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