

2599183

Registered provider: Omega Care Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home is registered to provide care for up to three children, aged between 9 to 17 years old, who may experience social or emotional difficulties.

The home has been registered with Ofsted since August 2020. The current manager has been registered since December 2021.

Due to COVID-19, 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 30 March 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 January 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	requires improvement to be good
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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: 30 March 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not previously inspected		

Inspection judgements

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

The quality-of-care plans are inconsistent. Children's needs are not always captured and information is not consistent across documents. Plans in the past were poor and did not provide staff with clear guidance. This affected children's outcomes.

The registered person has ensured that there is consideration of the needs of other children in pre-admission planning. One local authority complimented the home about the careful planning for a child. Under the previous interim manager, poor matching meant that the home's location was unsuitable to meet a child's needs and keep him safe. This adversely affected the other child in the home. The current manager appropriately ended the placement to ensure the safety of all children.

Staff have developed creative tools to measure children's progress. These help children to visualise the improvement that they have made. Examples include spider graphs, which illustrate the progress made by children.

Children who currently live in the home have good relationships with staff and a sense of belonging. Staff have designed a range of enjoyable activities to meet children's identity needs and education needs. The staff understand and support children's diversity needs.

Children are not consistently accessing education packages. However, there has been clear communication between staff, schools and the virtual school. There are plans in place to increase attendance and reintegration. Staff act as good advocates for children.

Children's health needs are now generally well managed. They now access support for their emotional well-being from specialist services. Friends and family visit children at their home. This also promotes their emotional well-being and helps build relationships.

Children's voices are heard through various forums in relation to choices such as activities and room decor. However, children do not comment on their plans, so their voices are not included. Children are aware of advocacy services, and they know how to complain.

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

Children's risk management plans lack clear strategies to keep some children safe. This does not help staff to understand how to manage risks. The new manager is improving risk management processes and communication.

The current manager appropriately notifies all agencies of all safeguarding concerns. The previous interim manager failed to notify Ofsted of significant concerns about child exploitation. This means the regulator had no oversight of what action was being taken to keep children safe.

Children sometimes have disagreements which can escalate. They can reflect on this themselves. Staff support them to resolve their issues and provide mediation if required. This ensures that clear and consistent boundaries are in place.

Missing from home procedures have improved. There was a lack of professional curiosity about a previous child's missing episodes, which compromised his safety. However, staff now have a better understanding of the push and pull factors associated with each child. Outside agencies complete independent return home interviews. Incidents have reduced over the past three months.

Behaviour management plans provide a clear strategy for each child to ensure that they are necessary and proportionate. Trained staff only use restraint as a last resort. Leaders do not use oversight and debriefs when the use of restraint involves the manager. This means that all incidents of restraint are not subject to regular scrutiny.

Incidents involving physical intervention have reduced in recent months. This reflects the improved relationships staff have with the children. Staff are now responding better to incidents of challenging behaviour.

Staff support children to develop their independence skills in line with their abilities. They have a better understanding of how to keep themselves safe. This helps children to prepare for their future.

The review of the location of the premises is confusing and contradictory. It does not contain strategies for managing all identified risks and requires updating.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

A new manager is now in post and registered with Ofsted in December 2021. She has identified and is addressing areas for improvement in the home. A staff member praised the new manager, stating that, 'She is great and really supportive.'

The manager understands the importance of building trusting relationships with children. She ensures that children receive care from a consistent staff team. She also advocates against any proposed changes that may disrupt children's day-to-day experiences. Previously, disruption to the team negatively affected children.

Leaders and managers do not challenge the placing authority effectively. This means that children's plans are not always up to date and do not fully reflect their needs or

achievements. In some cases, plans were not provided. This negatively affects multi-agency working and children's progress.

The registered manager has identified that record management needs to improve. Training is being arranged for all staff to attend. Monthly audits now track case recording to improve quality. This will help staff to show the positive effect of their care and support.

Children are not encouraged to access their case records or contribute to them. This limits the understanding that children have about their experiences and backgrounds.

The registered manager and staff have developed good-quality relationships with outside agencies. Children now receive better care and support as a result. A professional said, 'I am very impressed by the communication from staff. The staff are all doing fantastic work.'

Staff now receive regular supervision and feel fully supported in their roles. A staff member stated, 'I love working here, it is a great home.' However, the registered provider did not have an annual appraisal process in place until recently. The registered manager intends to address this shortfall.

Despite a change in the independent person, the quality of independent monitoring remains poor. It also lacks evaluation of practice. This generally fails to include the views of children and external stakeholders. This does not support improvement in the home as it does not provide a clear insight into the quality of care.

Effective monitoring and management oversight needs to be embedded into the home. The new manager has started this process to track children's progress and improve general practice.

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 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; 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; and that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(b)(c)) Specifically, children's risks and vulnerabilities need to be thoroughly assessed and understood. Plans should be reviewed and updated as necessary in order to provide staff with clear guidance on how to mitigate and respond to risk. Staff should understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting children from harm and be proactive in keeping children safe. The home's location should be reviewed to	24 March 2022

ensure that it is safe for children to live there, taking into account their presenting risks and needs.	
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— 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'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; 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; 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)(e)(f)(h)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that continuity of care is prioritised to promote the development of trusting relationships with children and to provide them with stability. Effective monitoring and review systems should be embedded in the home so that children's progress is tracked and practice within the home is monitored to drive forward improvements in the quality of care.	24 March 2022
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	24 March 2022

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; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2) (a)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) Specifically, the provider should ensure that children should only be admitted to the home, based on a thorough assessment of their needs, and the ability of staff to meet those needs effectively. The assessment should consider the impact of the location of the home on the new child and any impact on children already living in the home in respect to their safety and well-being. Children’s plans should provide staff with clear guidance to meet their needs. Plans should be regularly reviewed and updated to include any emerging needs and record progress and outcomes.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the	24 March 2022

registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)) Specifically, HMCI should be notified of all serious incidents as described in the regulation. Notifications should include details of additional relevant information and action taken to ensure children’s safety.	
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children’s home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12 (2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2)) In particular, the review should clearly detail what the risks are and how they will be managed with reference to children’s specific needs, and should take into account relevant knowledge about the local area.	24 March 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c)) Specifically, all staff must have an annual appraisal in line with policy and procedures.	24 March 2022
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	24 March 2022

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 (4)(a)(b) (5))

In particular, the report should provide a clear statement of opinion and provide robust evaluation of practice in the home. This should include feedback from children and external stakeholders to inform and enrich the independent person's evaluation.

Recommendations

- The registered provider should ensure that all children have an up-to-date care plan on their file, through close partnership work with the child's local authority and social worker. Where this is not provided, the registered person should provide evidence of any actions they have taken to escalate their concerns. Such partnership working should take place at the earliest opportunity. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 11, paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4)
- The registered provider should ensure that each child has access to their records. Staff should actively encourage children to read their records and contribute to them. This includes children recording significant life events and helping them to understand their history. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraphs 14.5 and 14.6)
- The registered provider should ensure that a system of regular scrutiny is used to provide management oversight of all incidents of control, discipline and restraint. In order to ensure that any use is fair, incidents which involve the registered manager should be reviewed independently with senior management overview and debrief. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

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 Limited

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

Responsible individual: Alekos Aresti

Registered manager: Nia Roscoe

Inspectors

Mark Woodbridge, Social Care Inspector

Karen Willson, Social Care Inspector

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