

2610935

Registered provider: Oakley House Children's Home Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to two children aged between 12 and 18 years who have needs in relation to neglect, emotional abuse or a traumatic experience.

The manager has been in post since the home was registered in January 2021.

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.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 October 2021

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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

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

Identified shortfalls in help and protection and leadership and management have limited the overall judgment to 'requires improvement to be good'. This is despite the positive support that the children receive from the staff.

There are some staff who have not been assessed as competent to administer medication, who do so. The staff are not clearly guided about the circumstances in which one child can be given medication following a discharge from hospital. However, this is available for the staff to administer and the staff are aware of the hospital discharge plan for this child.

The manager works with professionals to ensure appropriate educational arrangements are in place for some children. However, one child does not have suitable education provision. Although the staff work on the child's life skills, the approach to home-based learning is unplanned. Therefore, opportunities for maintaining routines and motivating the child to learn are potentially lost.

The home feels welcoming and is generally decorated well. However, the accommodation is undermined by some areas which are not put to good use or require repair. One child's has a bedroom light that does not work, although the main light works. The rear hallway floor becomes wet when it rains. The children's bathroom has no curtain or blind and this arrangement does not ensure the children's privacy.

The manager has carefully assessed the two children and ensured that moving into the home was a positive experience. As a result, the children enjoy a settled home and feel nurtured.

The manager and the staff are committed to the children and want them to do well. The children receive individualised care and support and have made progress from their starting points. One social worker said that this was the first place that the child had settled, and the child was engaging well with other services. This was a breakthrough for this child who is making positive changes.

The staff have therapeutic training that helps them to understand the children's past experiences and relationship breakdowns. The staff take time to understand the children's interests and their personalities. The staff are skilled at engaging with the children. As a result, the children have developed strong relationships with the staff and are positive about their experiences of living at the home. One child rated the home as 'excellent and outstanding.'

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

There are no serious or widespread safeguarding failures. However, there are areas that require improvement to ensure there is an effective and consistent approach to safeguarding the children.

The fire risk assessment has elements that do not accurately reflect the arrangements at the home. For example, the assessment refers to waking-night staff monitoring the children. However, there are no waking-night staff. The assessment also states that the fire doors, which are propped open during the day must be closed at night. However, there is no evidence that staff close these doors as part of the evening routine. There are staff who have not completed an emergency evacuation practice and may not understand the fire risks or how to respond effectively in an emergency evacuation.

A small shower room, which does not have the space for children to dress after a shower, leads directly onto a communal landing. The patio area has patio slabs that are loose and could cause a trip hazard. These two areas were identified before the home opened and have not been addressed, despite assurances from the registered person.

Some children have a history that indicates a potential risk of ligature use. Therefore, there are ligature cutters stored at the home. However, the staff have not received training in how to use these. This does not provide the staff with the knowledge of how to manage a situation safely.

The safeguarding and whistle-blowing policies fail to guide the staff in reporting concerns about managers. These do not detail who to go to if the concern was about a senior manager. Therefore, the safeguarding procedures are not all clear.

Children's risk-taking behaviours have reduced following an initial settling period. Since that time, the children have built positive relationships with the staff and there have been very few incidents. There have been no complaints, safeguarding concerns or physical restraints.

The staff have developed positive relationships with the children, and these support the children's safety. The children choose to spend time with the staff, and this gives children a positive daily structure. The staff have a good understanding of the children's individual risks and potential triggers to incidents. The staff help the children to manage their anxieties and unsafe situations.

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

The manager is experienced and qualified for the role. She has been in post since the home opened. The staff team is relatively new and most of the staff are inexperienced. Two of the staff team have experience of working in residential childcare. The manager and responsible person have worked shifts to try to balance the experience of the staff team. However, there have been shifts when there have not been any staff who have passed probation or experienced staff on duty. This

fails to ensure that children are cared for by staff who have the experience to manage complex situations.

The staff recruitment checks lack detail. The staff's qualifications are not recorded as being verified. Additionally, the responsible person has worked at the home without any written confirmation that pre-employment checks have been completed. The lack of clear recruitment systems undermines the manager's ability to ensure effective safety checks are completed for all of the staff.

The staff induction records are stored away from the home. This means the manager is not able to demonstrate effectively that all of the staff receive a good-quality induction.

The caring and motivated staff feel supported through regular supervision and support from the manager. Supervision records demonstrate that reflective discussions take place. However, the staff do not sign their supervision records. This does not indicate shared discussions about the actions set. Furthermore, it is not possible to know if the records are an accurate reflection of what was discussed.

The staff are offered a wide variety of relevant and interesting training which helps them to understand their roles and the children's needs. The staff have completed a three-day training course in therapeutic attachment. The training has helped them begin to understand the impact of children's trauma. However, two of the staff have not completed basic core training in administering medication, food safety, first aid or child exploitation.

Records are unclear, and some recent information is unavailable. Some of the children's support plans have specified targets. However, the support plans do not clearly guide the staff as to how children's targets are to be reached. The staff rotas do not all clearly reflect which staff are on duty and what their actual roles are.

The staff do not actively encourage the children to read their own records. This means that the children do not have the opportunity to add information and may not be aware that these are available for them to read.

The independent visitor regularly visits the home but does not always speak with the staff and the professionals involved with the home. This undermines the effectiveness of the visitor's ability to fully understand the quality of care provided. Additionally, the visitor has not included a clear statement as to whether the children are safeguarded effectively or their well-being promoted.

While several areas for improvement have been identified, there is no information to suggest that the children's safety is compromised, or their welfare is not promoted. The manager has the capacity to address the issues raised and has plans to do so.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and 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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))	20 December 2021
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 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; 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. that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)(d)(e)) In particular:	8 November 2021

ensure that bathrooms and shower rooms used by children provide appropriate privacy and safety; ensure that the garden patio slabs are appropriately fixed to address the trip hazard; ensure that organisational safeguarding and whistle-blowing policies guide staff effectively in how to and who to raise concerns to about the manager and responsible individual; ensure that the manager is provided with a summary of the suitability checks undertaken, and the outcomes, for any person working in the home.	
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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)) In particular: ensure that children receive care from an experienced and skilled staff team; ensure that all staff, who are leading shifts, have completed the core training; ensure that all staff complete use of ligature cutter training. ensure, and provide evidence, that suitable induction arrangements are in place for staff.	3 January 2022
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005^(F1) applies to the home—	25 October 2021

the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) In particular: ensure that the fire risk assessment accurately reflects the staffing arrangements in place; ensure that all persons working in the home practise emergency evacuations; ensure that required safety actions are evidenced as taking place as detailed in the fire risk assessment.	
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— If they consent, to interview in private the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home 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. (Regulation 44 (2(a)) (4)(a)(b))	3 January 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when children placed in the home are not participating in education, the child is supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that only the staff who are trained and assessed as competent to do so administer medication. In particular, ensure that there is clear written guidance for each child relating to the administration of over-the-counter medication. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)

- The registered person should ensure that a member of staff who has at least six months' experience, and has successfully completed their probation, is on duty at all times. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.15)
- The registered person should ensure that copies of staff qualifications and all recruitment checks, as set out in regulation 32 are completed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that both the person giving the supervision and staff member sign and have a copy of the record. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, ensure that children's care records and staff rotas are clear and accurate and that children's support plans provide clear and detailed guidance for staff. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff regularly remind children of their rights to see information kept about them and provide information about how they might be supported to access their records in later life. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.6)

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: 2610935

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Oakley House Children's Home Limited

Registered provider address: Unit D, 17 Plumbers Row, London E1 1EQ

Responsible individual: Noor Hasmat-Ali

Registered manager: Hayley Roberts

Inspector

Joanna Heller, Social Care Inspector

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