

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 with social and emotional difficulties.

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

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 October 2023

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: 4 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/10/2022	Full	Good
15/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
05/10/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There were two children living at the home at time of inspection. The children are positive about living at the home and the support that they receive from staff.

There are positive relationships between the staff and children. There is a stable staff team, and the use of agency staff is minimal. This allows children to develop positive relationships with the staff who are working with them.

Both children are engaging in education. One child had been out of education for a number of years and receives some tutoring. Staff support children's learning and education at the home. Regular conversations about education support the children in this area, and help children to think about their aspirations for the future. One child is interested in completing an apprenticeship. The staff spend time discussing this with them and looking at the entry requirements.

Staff support children with their health. For children who do not eat a healthy diet, staff encourage children to eat healthily. Staff talk to children about the health risks of substance and alcohol misuse to increase their awareness. Staff advocate for children to receive support with their mental health from external services.

Children take part in a number of activities, including going to the cinema, Halloween events and visiting theme parks. Staff are exploring local boxing clubs for one child and purchased a punchbag for the children to use.

Children feel comfortable at the home. One child regularly has friends to visit, which is something they have not been able to do previously. The child enjoys being able to spend time with their friends in this way.

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

Staff understand the protocols to follow when a child goes missing from home. Staff work closely with the police and placing authorities when they do not know a child's location. Staff search the local area and train stations to try and locate children. The manager raises concerns when children go missing from home, or there is an increase in other incidents, with the placing authority to ensure that external professionals are aware.

The staff work closely with professionals to manage and reduce risks. When children are at risk of exploitation, staff are aware of the importance of sharing information with other professionals. Children have been able to talk to staff about concerning activities that they have been involved with in the community. This means that staff are able to support the children and report concerns as required.

The manager ensures that referrals to the local authority designated officer (LADO) are made promptly. The manager follows guidance from the LADO as required. When an allegation was made against a member of staff, the manager worked closely with the police and the LADO. The child who made the allegation was kept updated about the progress and was informed of the outcome to ensure that they felt comfortable with the staff member returning to work.

The staff follow clear strategies and use de-escalation techniques. This has meant there has only been one restraint in the last year. The staff understand children's past experiences and their risks. Children's risk assessments and care plans are personalised to the children. However, the information in these plans and risk assessments is not kept up to date.

Children take part in regular key-worker sessions. Staff spend time talking to children about many different areas of their lives. However, staff do not always support children to fully understand risks and how to keep safe. An incident took place where a child concealed a knife in their bedroom. The staff have failed to hold a conversation with the child regarding the dangers of this. Another incident, when the child reported potential exploitation, was not explored with the child or reported to the manager.

Safer recruitment processes are not consistently followed. Gaps in staff employment histories are not always explored. The company's policy for undertaking criminal records checks from other countries for staff who have lived overseas is not followed.

Notifications to Ofsted are not always made or sent in a timely manner, which limits Ofsted's oversight of the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and qualified. The manager knows the children well and uses their views to help to develop the home. The manager understands the progress that children make and is aspirational for the children.

Professionals report that communication is good and that the staff know the children well. The manager has challenged placing authorities when there have been concerns about lack of communication or progression of children's plans. The manager is proactive in ensuring that children receive the support they are entitled to from their placing authorities. For one child, the manager has chased plans for their transition to adulthood to ensure that plans are in place to reduce anxieties for the child.

Supervision sessions and team meetings take place regularly. This supports staff to develop their knowledge and reflect on their practice. Staff report that they feel supported by the manager.

Appraisals for staff are undertaken, although these are not always recorded in a timely manner. The staff appraisals lack feedback from professionals and children. This means there is no objective overview of the staff member's performance and areas for development.

The staff have bespoke training to support children's individual needs. Despite this, some staff have still not finished their level 3 qualification within the required timescales. This was raised at last inspection. There have been some difficulties, due to the training provider, which the manager has challenged. One member of staff does not have a level 3 qualification and has not started this. Despite this, there is no workforce plan in place to monitor any training needs effectively.

The manager welcomes external scrutiny from the independent visitor. However, the independent visitor's reports do not always contain external feedback and all the visits have been announced. This means that the independent visitor is not gaining a thorough insight into the home due to lack of feedback from people who use the service.

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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)) Ensure that discussions with children about their risks are taking place and that children's care plans and risk assessments are kept up to date with current information.	22 December 2023
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, 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; full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.	12 January 2024

For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 3 Diploma”); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(a)(b)(d) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)) Ensure that all staff who have worked in children’s homes for more than two years achieve a relevant level 3 qualification and that all gaps in employment are explored and overseas criminal checks are carried out in line with the company policy.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e)) In particular, ensure that notifications are made promptly for all significant incidents.	22 December 2023
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced. (Regulation 44 (2)(a) (3))	2 February 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that there is a workforce plan that can fulfil the workforce-related requirement of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that annual appraisals take place and are recorded and accessible to the staff member and include, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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

Leanne Lyon, Social Care Inspector

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