

2671486

Registered provider: Oak House Childrens Home Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

An independent provider runs this home. It offers care for up to four children aged between 10 and 18 with social and emotional difficulties.

There is a registered school on the same site as the home. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision.

The registered manager left in March 2023. A new manager was appointed in April 2023 and is in the process of registering with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 June 2023

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: 31 January 2023

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
31/01/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

One child, who was living at the home at the time of the last inspection, moved out in February 2023. While initial assessment identified that staff could meet the child's needs, these needs changed and could no longer be met. No children were living at the home from February 2023 until the current child moved in, one week before this inspection.

The home has recently gone through refurbishment. Children can live in individual flats, and there are communal areas where they can meet. However, each flat entrance can only be accessed by a fob that staff control. This means that the child must ask staff to open the door to and from their flat. This limits their freedom and choice. This arrangement had not been assessed and agreed. Children's restricted access to areas of the home, without review, was raised as a shortfall at the last inspection.

Inspectors found full bin bags on the patio, cigarette ends on the patio, a large shed door propped on the side of a shed and a fire door propped open with work tools. This does not provide a homely and safe environment.

The child living at the home experienced a meaningful and well-planned move in. The manager worked closely with external professionals to gather information. Staff met the child at their family home before they moved in. Staff used a variety of communication methods to start building a relationship with the child. This included staff and the child writing notes and letters to each other and, when the child was ready, talking. The child made the decision about when they would move in. As a result, the child has settled quickly.

Staff are helping the child to build trusting relationships. Staff understand that the child has missed opportunities to develop the skills needed to make friends and feel part of a community. Staff spend time with the child engaging in activities that the child enjoys, such as K-Pop and arts and crafts. The child has been to a shop in the local community, which is noted as good progress. Staff are helping the child to gain confidence and develop social skills.

The child had not been in education for six months before moving into the home. They are now engaging with education, and their attendance is good. The child is enjoying this experience, and there are already plans to extend the times of the child's school day. Staff understand the importance of the child learning.

The child has made good initial progress. Staff used their knowledge of the child's experiences to focus on their health and well-being. Within one week, the child has made progress in attending to their own hygiene, initiating conversations, talking and eating. Additional progress has been made in the child developing a sleep

routine. This has helped the child to experience improved mental health and build their self-esteem.

Staff help the child to stay in touch with people who are important to them. The child's family visits the home. The child has a mobile phone to stay in touch with their family between visits. A family member said that the staff are welcoming, and there has been good communication from staff.

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

On one occasion, a child made a disclosure to staff. This was reported to the child's social worker. An action for the previous manager was to undertake an investigation. However, neither the current manager or responsible individual could provide evidence of the outcome of the investigation. It is unclear if staff practice was thoroughly explored and lessons learned or if the child was supported effectively.

Although behaviour plans lack clarity on strategies to support the child, risk management plans are detailed and clearly explained to staff. Staff spoken with know how to keep the child safe. The child said that they feel safe living at the home. Staff understand the child's vulnerabilities.

Since the last inspection, no children have left the home without permission. There have been no physical interventions, consequences or room searches.

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

The manager, who is a qualified social worker, was appointed at the end of April 2023 and is applying to register with Ofsted.

The child has highly complex needs. They have only lived at the home for a very short time. Staff recently received training in the home's attachment-model approach.

Except for one new staff member, the whole staff team previously worked in elderly residential care. Staff inductions were raised as a shortfall at the last inspection. However, the induction format does not evidence staff's learning or competency.

The provider has not submitted revisions to the statement of purpose to Ofsted since June 2022, despite changes of managers and the format of the home.

It is not clear how opportunities have been provided to staff to learn from the previous child's placement ending and staff's experiences while they were redeployed to another of the organisation's homes.

The workforce development plan is for the organisation and does not support the manager to develop the individual team members in a way that is useful to the home.

Monitoring by the manager is not yet completely embedded. A staff member described a game of catch as being 'slightly violent'. The record was made on 16 June 2023 and had not been addressed at the time of the inspection. Internal monitoring was raised as a shortfall at the last inspection.

Staff feel supported by the new manager. The team is stable, and there are enough staff to meet the child's needs. Appropriate recruitment checks have been carried out. The manager understands the plans for the child, including their goals and permanence for the future.

Not all staff have a relevant level 3 diploma. However, they are working towards this and are within the timescales 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 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; 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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(d)) In particular, ensure that:	4 August 2023

Staff recognise and intervene when a child is at risk of harm; Leaders and managers investigate incidents when directed and share outcomes with relevant professionals; Bin bags, cigarette ends and the shed door in the garden are removed; Fire doors are not propped open.	
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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h)) Monitor, review and discuss the language used by staff in records about children. This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	18 August 2023
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and	4 August 2023

allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(ii)(iii)(iv)) This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. (Regulation 33 (1)(a)) This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	18 August 2023
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision; subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b) (5))	18 August 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should have a workforce plan that can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, page 53, paragraph 10.8)

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: 2671486

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Oak House Childrens Home Limited

Registered provider address: A B C Care Solutions, 249 Cranbrook Road, Ilford IG1 4TG

Responsible individual: Saheena Saeed

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Mandy Start, Social Care Inspector
Hannah Phillips, Social Care 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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