

2671486

Registered provider: Oak House Children's Home Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

An independent provider runs this home. The home can care for up to eight children aged between 8 and 18 with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2022.

Inspection dates: 31 January and 1 February 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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Not previously inspected

Inspection judgements

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

This inspection identified shortfalls in safeguarding and leadership and management of the home.

At the time of this inspection, one child was living at the home. No other children have lived at the home since it opened in July 2022. The registered manager has given notice on the child's placement. Although the initial assessment was that staff would be able to meet the child's needs, these needs have changed. The manager identified that staff lacked the skills and experience to meet the child's changing needs.

The home is spacious and well decorated. However, at the time of the inspection a broken pool table had been stored outside the house. Although the child cannot access this area, the broken table was visible through the lounge window.

Staff organise activities that they know the child will enjoy. The child has visited theme parks and been swimming. The child said, 'The best thing about living here is being near the sea.' The child enjoys imaginative play. Staff use role play to encourage the child to spend quality time with them. Staff focus their time on building a relationship with the child in meaningful ways.

The child had not been in education for one year before living at the home. The manager challenged relevant professionals to find an appropriate education placement. Staff prepared the child for education. They stayed with the child as part of a planned induction back to education. The child now attends school full time. Attendance is good and the child is making progress.

Staff encourage the child to pursue their hobbies and interests. The child is a talented performer. Staff take the child to a theatre club and help them prepare for shows. Staff use encouragement and praise, which helps the child to build their confidence and self-esteem. Consequently, the child is now starring in a well-known musical at the local theatre.

The child is helped to stay in touch with people who are important to them. Staff make certain that the child can call their family members. Staff stay with the child to provide emotional support if they need it during visits. This helps the child to feel a sense of belonging to their family.

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

Staff use distraction and de-escalation strategies when the child is feeling anxious. These approaches have been tailored to the child's interests. This helps the child to

respond when they are feeling worried. Staff record incidents and the manager evaluates staff's approaches. However, when staff have restrained the child, they have failed to describe the holds used and the duration of each hold. This limits the manager's ability to consider the proportionality of the restraint.

Staff do not consistently follow risk assessments. On two occasions, the child took a lighter and tried to set fire to objects in the kitchen. The description of the level of support that the child requires is contradictory from one assessment to another. Risks to the child of travelling in a car are not recorded accurately. New behaviours from the child that place staff at risk have not been added to risk assessments. This could lead to inconsistencies in how staff respond to the child and the effectiveness of their actions.

Staff sometimes restrict access to the kitchen to safeguard the child from harm. However, the manager does not keep this restriction under review. This means that the child is limited to being in certain areas of the home for varying times without consideration of whether this is necessary.

A detailed missing-from-home procedure is in place for the child. The procedure is clearly written and includes the child's vulnerabilities. The child has not been missing since living at the home.

Staff work closely with the local police youth liaison officer. Staff arrange for him to spend time with the child. This helps the child to learn about how their behaviour affects other people. Furthermore, this has helped staff to understand their responsibilities to manage incidents when they occur.

Staff understand their responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns. A social worker said that communication from staff is good.

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

The registered manager is suitably experienced and is working towards a relevant level 5 qualification within the required timescale. Two deputy managers support her. The management team is focused on supporting the staff in their roles.

The manager does not have effective monitoring and review systems. There is insufficient oversight of the home to make continuous improvements to the quality of care provided.

The manager has not consistently verified why staff left their previous employment. This undermines her ability to ensure that effective safety checks are made on all staff.

Staff inductions are not regularly carried out. The inspector found a partially completed induction record and a blank induction record for staff who have been

employed at the home for more than six months. This means that the manager has not fully assessed the competency of staff to undertake their roles effectively.

The manager notifies Ofsted of serious incidents. However, notifications are consistently submitted late. This limits Ofsted's ability to monitor serious incidents at the home and the effectiveness of staff's actions.

The registered manager has completed a review of the quality of care. However, feedback was not obtained from the child. This restricts the manager's ability to make improvements to the child's experiences.

The workforce development plan does not support the manager to plan the continuing professional development actions for staff.

Staff benefit from regular supervisions that focus on the child's needs. Team meetings are well attended and structured around building relationships with the child. The manager understands the impact that the work can have on staff. Staff say that they feel supported by the manager.

The staff team is diverse. There is a balance of new and experienced staff. The manager has not used any agency staff. This means that the child is cared for by people who are consistent in their life.

Staff receive the organisation's mandatory training. The manager organises additional training and competency sign-off for delegated tasks. All staff have been enrolled on a relevant level 3 qualification.

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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) This relates to staff following risk assessments and ensuring that risk assessments clearly evidence known risks and support levels required to keep the child safe.	3 March 2023
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) This relates to the registered manager using monitoring systems effectively to make improvements.	24 March 2023
The registered person must ensure that— any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—	3 March 2023

is kept under review and, if necessary, revised. (Regulation 21 (c)(iii)) This relates to the registered manager reviewing restrictions placed on the child to access areas of the home.	
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— 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) (3)(d)) This relates to the registered manager making reasonable attempts to verify why staff left their previous employment.	24 March 2023
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. (Regulation 33 (1)(a)) This relates to the manager ensuring that staff complete an induction and that each staff member’s competency to undertake their role is assessed and evidenced.	31 March 2023
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— a description of the measure and its duration. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv))	3 March 2023
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. (Regulation 45 (2)(b))	30 June 2023

This relates to the manager obtaining feedback from the child about their experiences and including this feedback in the quality of care review.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should provide a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of children. This will, in most cases, be a homely, domestic environment. In particular, the broken pool table should be removed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil workforce-related requirements. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)

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 Children's Home Limited

Registered provider address: 249 Cranbrook Road, Ilford IG1 4TG

Responsible individual: Saheena Saeed

Registered manager: Jenny Brown

Inspector

Mandy Start, Social Care Inspector

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