

2704477

Registered provider: Optimum Youth Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to three children. The homes statement of purpose states that it cares for children who have encountered adverse childhood experiences because of early life trauma, neglect and family breakdown or disruption.

The home registered with Ofsted in March 2023 and a manager registered at the same time. The post for a registered manager is currently vacant.

This is the home's first inspection since registration.

At the time of this inspection, no children were living at the home. Managers and staff were supporting a child to prepare for their planned move to the home.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 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: 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: good

No children have lived at this home since it opened in March 2023. Managers and staff were providing intensive outreach support to a child in preparation for their planned transition to the home. This involved working collaboratively with the child's social worker and health professionals.

Managers and staff have worked well with social workers and health professionals to help the child manage their emotions, expressions of anxiety and distress. One health professional said, 'Staff have been patient, resilient and committed to caring for the child.'

Managers and staff report that the child has made small but important progress in their presentation since the beginning of the transition. For example, the child has shown more interest in their personal appearance and has become 'curious' as to what attending a new school will be like, after previously refusing to engage in education.

Managers and staff have provided the child with opportunities to engage in social activities, such as playing board games together, days out in the community and a holiday. These opportunities have helped the child to gain new experiences and begin to develop positive relationships with staff in preparation for their move to the home.

Managers and staff have collaborated well with education colleagues to identify a school place for the child. Managers and staff understand the barriers to education and have been proactive to address these. Staff have high aspirations for the child and wish to ensure that they reach their full potential.

Staff have worked hard to involve the child's parent with the planning of the child's move to the home. This included the child and parent visiting the home and having a meal with staff. This helped the child to prepare for this significant transition and to spend quality time with their parent and staff.

Throughout the child's transition to the home, managers and staff have ensured that their wishes and feelings have been listened to and promoted. Staff are strong advocates for the child.

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

Staff work effectively with the professional network to devise specific safety plans to minimise any risk of harm to the child.

Restraints are used as a last resort and only as a safeguarding measure. Staff have received appropriate training in de-escalation and restraint techniques. Strong and consistent teamwork ensures that incidents are managed appropriately and safely. Incidents are clearly recorded and outline the actions taken by staff to keep the child safe. Managers' oversight of these incidents and records is effective.

Staff helped the child to understand the need for boundaries in the home and the consequences for unacceptable behaviour. They adapted the children's guide to make it specific to the child's individual needs. As a result, the child has a good understanding of the home's routines, boundaries and staff's expectations.

The home is secure and safe. Managers and staff have ensured that the home meets health and safety requirements. Managers are alert to potential risk and make changes in the home to reduce risk. For example, they have created a calming and safe space in the home where the child can relax.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers are experienced practitioners in the areas of children's social and residential care. There is a strong focus on child-centred care and practice. Consequently, decisions made by leaders and managers consistently consider the impact on the child's emotional and physical well-being.

An interim manager has been in post since the end of March 2023 and has submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

Staff receive supervision, support and training which enables them to understand the child's needs and respond effectively. Managers receive additional clinical supervision sessions to support them in their role. Leaders and managers understand the importance of self-reflection when caring for traumatised children. Extending the clinical supervision to the staff team would further strengthen the care and support provided to the child.

Internal and external monitoring is a strength. Leaders and managers take action to addresses any shortfalls or recommendations raised in the independent person's monitoring reports. This is helping them to make continuous improvements in the home.

Leaders and managers are clear about the skills and abilities of the staff team, and the strengths and limitations of the home. The local authority head of service said that leaders and managers are thoughtful and measured in their responses and are clear about what they can and cannot do.

Strong collaborative working with the child's placing authority, education and health colleagues has ensured a well-coordinated and multi-disciplinary approach to care planning. Social and healthcare professionals describe leaders and managers as 'refreshing' in their approach. They say that they think 'creatively' and 'outside the box' to meet the needs of the child.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff have access to appropriate supervision by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional that enables them to process the experiences of caring for traumatised children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: 2704477

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Optimum Youth Care Limited

Registered provider address: 2a Rickyard Barn Stoke Road, Blisworth,
Northampton, Northamptonshire, England, NN7 3DB

Responsible individual: Sarah Walters

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Colin Bent, Social Care Inspector
Amena Begum, Social Care Inspector

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