

2704477

Registered provider: OPTIMUM YOUTH CARE LIMITED

Assurance 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 home's 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.

Inspection date: 31 January 2024

Date of last inspection: 10 May 2023

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Staff ensure that children live in a welcoming home, and children are making good progress. One child told inspectors that the home is 'brilliant', that they feel safe and are able to discuss any worries or concerns with staff. Inspectors saw children and staff interacting positively during this visit.

The manager and staff promote children's education well. One child has been supported to re-engage with education. Another child is provided with education on site until an appropriate school is identified. This child is making good progress.

Feedback from social workers is overwhelmingly positive about the care that staff provide. Staff understand the children's complex needs.

Staff are thoughtful about family time and support arrangements with parents and extended family members when appropriate. This helps children to be connected to their families while they live away from them.

Staff use restraint proportionately to keep children and others safe. However, since the last inspection not all staff who were involved in physical intervention had appropriate training in restraint at the point of using the measure. Furthermore, discussions with children and staff afterwards are not always recorded and management oversight of these incidents is not consistent.

Leaders and the manager take appropriate steps when concerns are raised about staff conduct. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of allegations against staff made by children. These have been appropriately referred to safeguarding partners and fully investigated.

Recruitment processes are not consistently adhered to. For example, gaps in employment history are not consistently explored, and more could be done by the provider to assure themselves of staff suitability for those staff who have recently arrived in the country.

There have been changes in the management team since the last inspection. A new home manager has been recently recruited. Leaders and managers recognise that there is work to be done to improve practice and the quality of care provided to children. They are committed to implementing improvements.

Staff do not receive regular supervision. However, staff report feeling supported by leaders and managers as they make themselves available to talk through worries or concerns. Staff are able to raise concerns with leaders and managers, for example in staff meetings or supervision, knowing they will be listened to.

Leaders and managers have provided staff with bespoke training relevant to the needs of the children in their care. This is commissioned in conjunction with the local authority social workers so that children's care and health needs are met. However, since the last inspection not all staff have completed some essential training, including safeguarding training, in a timely manner.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/05/2023	Full	Good

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 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that all staff receive appropriate training to enable them to meet the needs of the children in their care. This includes the safeguarding and physical restraint training.	27 March 2024
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	27 March 2024
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must ensure that—	27 March 2024

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— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, this refers to the registered person ensuring that records of restraint include debriefs with child and staff and manager's oversight.	
The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4;	27 March 2024

ensure that the records are kept up to date.
(Regulation 37 (2)(a)(b))

In particular, this refers to the registered person ensuring that there are accurate records of all visitors and staff working in the home.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that information about whistle blowing includes clear procedures for how staff should report to an appropriate authority any concern they have about a child within the home. In particular, this relates to ensuring that staff are clear how to report concerns they have in regards to staff who are related to leaders and managers of the organisation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.15)
- The registered person should ensure that they maintain good employment practice, as set out in regulations 31 to 33. In particular, this relates to ensuring that gaps in employment are consistently explored. Furthermore, leaders and manager should be clear what additional employment checks should be carried out for staff who have recently arrived from outside of the United Kingdom. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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 NN7 3DB

Responsible individual: Sarah Walters

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Aneta Wasilewska, Social Care Inspector
Naintara Khosla, His Majesty Inspector

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