

2721681

Registered provider: Oakland Support Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that provides care for up to four children who may require support with their social, emotional or mental health needs. There were three children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2023.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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

Children live in a large, spacious and well-furnished home. Communal spaces include a comfortable lounge and well-equipped games room. A wide range of resources are available, including games consoles, board games and books. The layout of the home enables children to spend time together, promoting a positive living environment.

Children regularly attend local clubs and activities. Staff support children to explore their hobbies and interests, such as music and cooking. One child attends a local support group and has positively contributed to raising awareness of equality and acceptance in the local community. This is a great achievement for the child.

Children are supported to access education. When children are not attending school, appropriate arrangements are put in place, such as home tutoring and online learning. The registered manager works in close partnership with the virtual school, ensuring that children receive appropriate support and resources. Children's successes at school are celebrated in the home, promoting a sense of pride and achievement.

Children are encouraged to look after their health. Staff support children to understand risks to their health, such as vaping and alcohol. Children are provided with opportunities to access therapy where this may benefit them. Staff sensitively support children in thoughtful and creative ways when they have experienced loss, promoting positive mental health and well-being.

Children regularly spend time with their families. The registered manager and staff team maintain frequent contact with family members and share information appropriately. As a result, children maintain positive relationships with people who are important to them. One family member said that their child is 'thriving' at the home.

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

Children have developed positive relationships with staff. Staff invest time in getting to know children and understand their individual risks and potential triggers. Behaviour support plans are reviewed regularly and have been effective in helping children stay safe. Consequently, there have been no incidents involving the use of physical intervention at the home.

Staff support children to maintain positive relationships with each other. They take prompt and effective action when disagreements occur between children. Mediation meetings enable children to reflect on their actions and understand the impact of their behaviour on others. In turn, staff listen to children's views and implement agreed actions to help resolve any conflict or disagreements.

Staff understand risks for children who may harm themselves. Positive relationships with staff enable children to discuss their worries with trusted staff. Safety plans are clear, identifying known risks and links to relevant history, further informing safety planning. Plans are reviewed and updated regularly, informing ongoing safeguarding practice.

Staff take appropriate action when children go missing from home. Safety plans are updated following missing-from-home incidents, and staff are informed of changes. Return interviews are completed by social workers, enabling children to share any concerns with an independent adult. However, one child's safety plan had not been updated to include key information following a return interview. In response, the registered manager had informed staff of this information directly, strengthening their response in safeguarding the child. The safety plan was amended to include this information during the inspection.

The registered manager ensures that any allegations made by children are fully investigated. Immediate action is taken to safeguard children, and relevant authorities are informed. However, on two occasions, safeguarding notifications were not sent to Ofsted following disclosures from children that resulted in a police investigation. In turn, this presents a barrier to effective regulatory oversight in ensuring that appropriate actions are taken to safeguard children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is present in the home and displays tenacity in their role in supporting children. They have played an active part in developing the home since it opened, and there are plans in place to continue making improvements. Monitoring systems in place enable timely reviews of incidents and identify learning opportunities for staff to improve practice.

Children's feedback informs ongoing development in the home. Children have contributed to the recruitment process by providing their own questions to be asked at the interview stage. This ensures that children's views are reflected when appointing new staff to work at the home.

The registered manager maintains effective partnerships with external professionals. Social workers are informed of incidents promptly, and safeguarding concerns are reported appropriately. External professionals report of effective communication and information-sharing. This ensures that there is a joined-up approach by those working together to improve outcomes for children.

Staff receive regular supervision to support them in their role. Children's needs are central to conversations. Staff feel supported by the registered manager and are able to reflect on their practice following incidents. Team meetings are held regularly, enabling wider information-sharing and reflective practice, to improve experiences for children.

Staff receive a variety of relevant training to support them in their roles. Essential training is prioritised for new staff joining the home. However, the completion of training that is specific to the identified needs of children moving into the home is not always prioritised. Consequently, this increases the risk of children being supported by staff who may have gaps in their knowledge or skills required to support their individual needs.

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 registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if — a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	19 April 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children's safety plan records are updated following any incidents of them going missing from the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that staff receive training related to children's individual needs when they move into the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

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: 2721681

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Oakland Support Services Limited

Responsible individual: Mark Forshaw

Registered manager: Andrew Jupp

Inspector

Chris Warren, Social Care Inspector

Lee Kirwin, Social Care Regulatory Inspection Manager

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