

2721681

Registered provider: Oakland support services ltd

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.

This inspection was brought forward in response to a serious allegation reported to Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 September 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 7 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/03/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The overall judgement of this home is inadequate due to serious shortfalls in help and protection and leadership and management. Despite some areas of positive practice, leaders have not always taken appropriate action to keep children safe.

Children have good relationships with staff. The staff are caring, and they know the children well. Staff invest time in getting to know the children. They have regular and open conversations to develop insight about the children's lives and build trust. The children think highly of the manager, and one child said that they have helped them a lot.

Children have made progress with their independence skills, and staff help children to prepare for adulthood. Children are supported to use public transport, cook for themselves and budget.

Staff promote education with children. One child recently completed their GCSE exams even though they had missed a large part of their education previously. Staff advocated for one child to move schools, and the child is now making progress in their new school. Children are encouraged to go to college and to pursue their interests.

Children generally get on well together. There have been periods of conflict between children, and staff have supported them in overcoming these issues. Consequently, children enjoy spending time with each other and have built up good relationships.

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

On receipt of a serious allegation, leaders did not follow the home's safeguarding procedures. Leaders did not take immediate action to safeguard the child involved. They did not share the allegation with key safeguarding agencies in line with their statutory responsibilities. This inaction delayed the safeguarding investigation.

One other allegation was also poorly managed. This allegation was not investigated well. The concern and subsequent investigation have not been shared outside the organisation. Leaders did not report it to the children's social workers, the local authority's designated officer or to Ofsted.

Staff are not recruited safely. One staff member was recruited by managers who were not suitably independent due to their relationship to the applicant. Furthermore, the staff member's work history had not been fully and properly verified. This staff member is now subject to an investigation following a serious allegation about their conduct.

Not all staff are trained in the safe removal of ligatures. The manager's monitoring systems are not effective in identifying which staff are trained to help children. Staff

routinely have ligature cutters on their person; however, some do not know how to use them. This leaves some children at risk, as staff may not be skilled in responding to children who may use ligatures.

Staff understand the risks for children who go missing from the home. The manager has escalated his concerns in this regard when needed. The manager works well with the local community to reduce risks for the children.

Physical interventions have not been used with children. Staff know how to help children to calm when they are distressed. However, not all the staff are trained in the home's model of physical intervention should it need to be used as a last resort.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The shortfalls identified relating to the help and protection of children are because of highly ineffective leadership. The leaders have failed to ensure that children are not at risk of harm. They have not followed safeguarding policies or acted promptly in response to concerns.

A senior manager has cultivated a closed culture. This has had a negative effect on how staff work together. The home's manager and responsible individual have escalated some concerns in relation to this.

There have been mixed messages from leaders to staff about how to care for children. This has created confusion. This poor leadership means that staff have provided care to children that is not in line with children's plans. As a result, one child has complained, and children have been put at risk of harm.

One child has moved into the home since the last inspection. This move was not assessed against the needs of the other children and was undertaken quicker than normal. The move was agreed by the responsible individual without the involvement of the registered manager. The child subsequently moved out at short notice due to risks to the child in the community.

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 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— 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) In particular, the registered person must follow the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures. In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff have the skills to keep children safe from harm, including training to respond to the use of ligatures. In particular, the registered person must take effective action to safeguard children and share concerns with key safeguarding agencies.	11 November 2024

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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the staff have the skills to care for the children and receive regular training in the organisation's physical intervention model. In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are led in a way that promotes effective teamwork.	11 November 2024
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the registered manager is involved in the assessment and decision-making around a new child moving into the home. In particular, the registered person must ensure that children have a positive experience when leaving the home.	11 November 2024
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—	11 November 2024

there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)) In particular, the registered person must inform Ofsted and other relevant persons of serious safeguarding concerns. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. 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— the individual is of integrity and good character; 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)(a)(d)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are recruited safely and information is available in relation to the individual in respect of schedule 2. This includes their Disclosure and Barring Service checks and checking as far as reasonably practicable the reasons for employment ending when involving the care of children and vulnerable adults.	11 November 2024

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 ltd

Responsible individual: Mark Forshaw

Registered manager: Andrew Jupp

Inspector

Mark Dawkins, Social Care Inspector

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