

2794973

Registered provider: Orchard Adolescent Care Group

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private provider and can provide care for up to one child who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

This was the first inspection since the home was registered with Ofsted on 15 November 2024. There was one child living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The registered manager and responsible individual were both present during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 February 2025

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 previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

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

The child is happy at the home and has begun to make progress in some aspects of their care. However, shortfalls in the leadership and management of the home and inconsistent staffing means that the child's experience of living in the home has been varied.

The child has started to explore their own identity and interests. Staff provide opportunities for the child to take part in activities, such as go karting and attending their local youth centre. When the child requested a specific style of clothing, staff listened and supported them to purchase items. This means that the child is building self-esteem and developing essential social skills.

The child has begun to make positive relationships with the staff caring for them. Social care professionals said, 'The staff are invested in [Name of child], and [Name of child] knows this.' However, responses by managers and staff to negative behaviour by the child have not always been child centred or therapeutic in their approach, as described in the home's statement of purpose. This impacts on the child's experiences of living in the home, and their ability to build meaningful relationships with those caring for them.

Leaders and managers ensure that the child is supported to share their views. The child has an independent advocate who helps them to voice their wishes. Staff hold regular, meaningful conversations with the child to involve them in decisions about their care. As a result, the child is developing a sense of belonging in the home.

Staff support the child to regularly see their family. Managers and staff work flexibly to accommodate the distance that the child's family needs to travel. This ensures that the child maintains positive relationships with those close to them, as well as staying connected to their hometown.

A significant number of staff have left the home since it registered. As a result, the child has experienced several changes in the people providing care for them, and staff practice has not always been consistent. This is something that managers are working to address, and there have been recent improvements.

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

The child moved to the home before the home and manager were registered with Ofsted. Managers did not thoroughly evaluate the child's individual risks alongside the skills and experience of the staff team. Consequently, some staff struggle to respond effectively to the child's behaviours and needs.

Managers ensure that the child's risk plans provide clear guidance for staff. Plans are regularly updated so that the strategies are tailored to the child's individualised needs. However, staff do not consistently follow the plans, meaning that situations are not always managed effectively or with confidence. This is something that the registered manager is seeking to address through supervisions that target areas of development for staff.

Several new staff members have recently joined the home, and the team is beginning to stabilise. As a result, the number of incidents for the child has begun to reduce.

Leaders and managers attend regular risk meetings with external professionals to review the child's vulnerabilities. External professionals involved in the child's care are regularly updated with important information, and suggest strategies to reduce risks. This means that there is a multi-agency approach to children's risk plans.

Staff are provided with an out-of-hours on-call system of support by managers. However, when staff use the system, the guidance to staff and messages to the child provided by some managers are not always child centred or helpful and, at times, have undermined staff practice. This does not ensure that the child is receiving child-centred, appropriate care, and limits opportunities to develop practice in the home.

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

The registered manager is organised and knows the child well. She has begun to establish a therapeutic ethos and instil professional boundaries in the home. However, some actions of the responsible individual have limited the development of cohesive leadership and management of the home. There is often a lack of clear guidance and direction for staff to ensure that high-quality care is provided for the child.

The registered manager has begun to embed effective managerial oversight of the home. However, issues with staff sufficiency have prevented the registered manager and responsible individual from fulfilling their roles. The responsible individual has regularly covered shifts for staff and the registered manager. The deputy manager and senior worker roles are vacant. Consequently, the registered manager has limited support when delegating day-to-day tasks and ensuring that there is continuity of management oversight when she is not in the home.

Staff attend regular team meetings. The registered manager uses each meeting to focus on a specific area of development. The team are beginning to establish a culture committed to improving their care of the child.

Leaders and managers have begun to introduce systems to identify areas of development for the service. However, these systems are not yet fully embedded, and this is something that managers are working to address. Consequently, there are missed opportunities to recognise and address shortfalls in staff practice.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that the care offered in the home's statement of purpose clearly outlines the details of the care that the home can provide. The therapeutic support described in the statement of purpose is not currently provided for the child inclusive of their care. Also, leaders and managers have not ensured that the details of the supervision arrangements for staff have been clearly cited. This means that the relevant stakeholders are not provided with a clear representation of the care offered by the provider.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered persons 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 persons 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— 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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that managers provide staff with effective guidance and support to ensure that situations are de-escalated effectively and in line with the home's therapeutic ethos.	3 April 2025

The registered person must ensure that there are sufficient staff to support the child's needs, including managers and senior practitioners. The registered person must ensure that staff work together effectively, providing consistency in care for the child. The registered person must ensure that there are systems of monitoring in place that identify shortfalls in staff practice effectively.	
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; 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 (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff follow the child's risk plans and work consistently as a team to manage risks for the child.	3 April 2025
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))	3 April 2025

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that they undertake a thorough evaluation of children's needs prior to them moving into the home, to ensure that staff have the knowledge, skills and experience to support the child.	
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (1) (5)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that details of supervision arrangements for staff are included in the statement of purpose. The registered person must ensure that any commitment to therapeutic care for the child, including care provided by commissioned services as outlined in the statement of purpose, is fulfilled.	3 April 2025

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: 2794973

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Orchard Adolescent Care Group

Responsible individual: Humma Ahmed

Registered manager: Neelam Latif

Inspector

Sarah Gilbert, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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