

1247212

Registered provider: Exceptional Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home that is registered for four young people who may present with a range of complex needs and functioning complications, including emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home caters for three young people in the main part of the house and one young person in the attached apartment.

The manager started working at the home in October 2018 and was registered with Ofsted in March 2019.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 May 2019

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 and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 8 August 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/08/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/05/2017	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, 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
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete the independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible;</p> <p>that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning.</p> <p>(Regulation 8(1)(2)(a)(b)(c))</p>	27/06/2019
<p>*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account</p>	27/06/2019

information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation (1)(2)(i)(v))	
<p>*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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. (Regulation 13(1)(2)(a))</p>	27/06/2019
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person must only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in schedule 2. (Regulation 32(1))(3)(d))</p>	27/06/2019
<p>The registered provider must prepare and implement a policy ('the behaviour management policy') which sets out—</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>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')—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35(1)(3)(b))</p>	27/06/2019
<p>The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which—</p> <p>are kept up to date and are signed and dated by the author of</p>	27/06/2019

each entry. (Regulation 36(1)(b)(c))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40(4)(c))	27/06/2019

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- Ensure records are kept detailing all individual incidents when children go missing from the home and actions taken by staff. In particular, support provided to young people on their return home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.31)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The experiences and progress of young people have been compromised because of the unsafe practice and ineffective management at the home.

Educational outcomes for some young people are poor. The current arrangements to support some young people to take part in meaningful education are limited and this affects their educational progress. This, and the lack of identified suitable education provision for some young people, affects education opportunities and has the potential to impact on their later life chances.

The health needs of young people are generally met well. Young people are up to date with routine health and development checks. The young people are supported and encouraged to maintain a healthy balanced diet and to participate in physical activities. However, one young person has not received specialist help to tackle substance misuse. Consequently, this places the young person at continuing risk.

Feedback from young people and placing social workers during the inspection was mixed. One young person stated, 'I feel that there is only one member of staff that I would talk to if I had a worry or concern.' A placing social worker stated, 'I am not entirely sure that this is the right placement, they could probably do better in motivating and meeting the needs of the young person.'

Young people benefit from regular key-work sessions focused around their individual needs such as behaviour, substance misuse and being missing from home. Key-work records demonstrate that staff offer the young people advice and guidance to help and protect them. However, one key-work session record indicates that a young person had become 'heightened' following the member of staff informing the young person that she may be moved far away or to a secure unit if she continued to go missing from home. This does not demonstrate that the session was presented in a helpful or supportive way to the young person.

Young people have regular contact with people who are important to them and this is

subject to careful assessment and monitoring when deemed to be in the young people's best interests. Staff members promote contact by providing young people with both practical and emotional support. Family members are invited to spend time at the home and the registered manager and staff have good relationships with the young people's families. Accordingly, young people enjoy good-quality, safe contact with family and friends.

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

The registered manager and staff are unable to identify, manage or minimise risks to young people. Poor-quality risk assessments, poor recording and ineffective sharing of information prevent the manager and staff from having a clear understanding of young people's needs and vulnerabilities. Risk assessments do not provide staff with effective strategies to help them to keep young people safe. This fails to ensure that risks to young people are managed consistently by the registered manager and staff or that appropriate support is in place to promote the safety of young people.

Safeguarding policies and procedures have not been followed when allegations have been made against staff. Records relating to allegations and the management of allegations are not maintained. Consequently, it is unclear as to what action has been taken to safeguard young people. The lack of recording does not demonstrate that allegations have been suitably managed to ensure that young people are safeguarded.

Ofsted was not informed that allegations had been made against staff in line with regulation 40 of The Children's Home's Regulations. Furthermore, the social workers of other young people placed at the home were not informed that the member of staff involved continued to work at the home while an investigation into the allegations was undertaken. A failure to share information with all relevant people compromises the safety and welfare of young people. Furthermore, the regulator is unable to carry out its monitoring function to ensure that all appropriate action is being taken by the provider to safeguard young people.

Young people's safety is further compromised by the lack of management oversight of physical restraints. Two members of staff refused a debrief following their involvement in an incident of physical restraint. This fails to demonstrate that the interventions used have been carefully considered to ensure that they are appropriate and that they have only been used as a last resort to protect the children involved.

The registered manager did not read and sign a safeguarding incident record, and signed another safeguarding incident record without reading it. This lack of management oversight places young people at risk and does not allow the registered manager to identify or take action to address poor safeguarding practice.

Recruitment practice is not sufficiently robust to ensure that only suitable people work at the home. For one new member of staff, only one reference was obtained. This does not meet the regulation requirements for children's homes.

There is a reduction in the number of times that young people are missing from home. When young people are missing from home, suitable action is taken to locate them as soon as possible. However, missing from home records do not demonstrate that

independent return home interviews take place to enable the young person to share information about why they went missing and the risks that they faced during the time that they were missing.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager is suitably qualified and has the experience to undertake his role. However, his current ineffective leadership means that he is not leading and managing the home in a manner that is consistent with the ethos and the outcomes that the home seeks to achieve and its approach to achieving them, as identified in the home's statement of purpose.

There are failings in management oversight and monitoring of the home to identify areas of weakness and to take decisive action to resolve these. Effective monitoring does not take place and, as a result, the quality and standard of care has fallen to an unacceptable level. The registered manager has not reviewed records or evaluated incidents to identify shortfalls in staff practice and to highlight patterns and trends. As a result, young people's progress, welfare and safety are compromised.

Recording systems at the home need to be strengthened. Placement plans do not include accurate and up-to-date information relating to young people, and risk assessments do not demonstrate the current risks to young people and appropriate strategies to manage risks. Information recorded in incident records differs to information in other records, such as weekly overview reports that are shared with placing social workers and risk assessments. Furthermore, serious safeguarding information is not recorded in the home's daily logs and is not shared at staff handover meetings. The poor recording and failure to share information results in young people being placed at risk.

The registered manager provided inconsistent information during the inspection about the arrangements to safeguard young people when allegations were made against staff. Rotas did not corroborate the information given by the registered manager. Rotas were not updated to include changes in staffing in the main part of the home and the attached apartment. Therefore, this does not provide a clear audit trail of who is working where within the setting. The lack of transparency of who is on duty potentially places young people at risk and compromises the continuity of care.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1247212

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Exceptional Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Malthouse Business Centre, 48 Southport Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 1QR

Responsible individual: Susan Rolfe

Registered manager: Lance Jackson

Inspector

Lisa Mulcahy, social care inspector

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