

1247212

Exceptional Care Ltd

Monitoring visit

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 children who may present with a range of complex needs and functioning complications, including emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home caters for three children in the main part of the house and one child in the attached apartment.

A new manager has been appointed for the home. The new manager will submit his application to register with Ofsted when he commences in his role.

Inspection date: 7 May 2020

This monitoring visit

This children's home was judged declined in effectiveness at the interim inspection on 18 February 2020. Inspectors identified significant concerns in relation to safeguarding practice, leadership and management and the quality of care provided to children. Following this inspection, Ofsted issued an emergency suspension notice. There have been no children living at the home since the emergency suspension notice was issued.

Two off-site monitoring visits have taken place to monitor the actions that the provider had taken in response to the shortfalls identified at the interim inspection. Both monitoring visits were off-site visits due to COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions. The first monitoring visit was on 3 April 2020, and the outcome of the monitoring visit was that the provider had taken some steps to address the shortfalls identified. However, further action was required to ensure that there was a suitably experienced, trained and skilled staff team to meet the needs of the children. This second monitoring visit took place to determine whether the provider had taken sufficient action to address the continued shortfalls.

Following the emergency suspension of the home and the failings identified, the interim manager resigned from his post, some of the staff team members were

dismissed and other members of the staff team are subject to performance improvement plans. The provider reported that they have recently recruited a suitably qualified and experienced manager and staff team. The responsible individual plans to manage the home with the support of the service manager and two deputy managers until the new manager is in post. However, safer recruitment is not sufficiently robust. Errors were identified in three of the four staff files sampled, including not obtaining full employment history, not verifying reasons for leaving previous employment and failing to identify discrepancies in employment dates in the application form and references. The provider accepted these shortfalls and agreed to complete a full review of their recruitment processes prior to children moving into the home.

Several changes to policies and procedures, recording systems, staff training and monitoring and review systems have been made to ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and are able to manage risks effectively.

The responsible individual and staff have discussed and reflected on the shortfalls identified at the interim inspection, what went wrong and the changes required to the policies and procedures to improve the quality of care and safeguarding practice at the home. Additionally, staff have received clear management direction and support. Team meetings and staff supervision will take place regularly in which the managers and staff will discuss roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures, reporting and recording, the home's ethos and the statement of purpose.

The procedures for considering new admissions to the home have been strengthened. All children will have a thorough and detailed compatibility risk assessment that will ensure that the needs of both children already living in the home and those moving in are carefully considered. This will ensure that children will only be placed at the home if their needs can be met. The senior staff team will review all admissions to the home.

There is a comprehensive induction programme for new staff and refresher training for other staff in areas such as safeguarding, restraint, professional boundaries, reporting and recording and key working. However, not all staff are yet compliant with regulation training requirements. COVID-19 has had an impact on the provider sourcing this training. The majority of staff are not sufficiently trained to deal with child exploitation, county lines, self-harm and risk management. None of the staff have attended radicalisation training. Staff training in safeguarding children and managing high-risk behaviour is an area that needs to improve, and the provider recognised the need for this training to be completed prior to the home re-opening.

Improved monitoring systems are aimed at helping the leaders and managers to identify and act to address shortfalls. The provider has implemented more robust management monitoring systems that include senior managers having off-site access to the home's records to ensure greater scrutiny of the quality of records. Furthermore, senior managers will complete unannounced visits to the home to

monitor practice and audit children's case records. This will ensure that poor practice is identified and managed effectively.

Improvement has been made to the home environment to ensure that it is safe, warm, comfortable and well presented. All damage at the home has been repaired and improvement made in the decor. Additionally, fire safety equipment is in place, and furniture has been replaced in children's bedrooms. Furthermore, the provider has changed the staff office back to a staff bedroom to ensure that there is a member of staff sleeping upstairs with the children.

The provider has taken steps to address the shortfalls identified at the interim inspection and accepts that they need to strengthen staff training and safer recruitment practice. Further requirements have been made to ensure that the provider takes effective action to ensure that staff are safely recruited and trained to effectively meet the needs of children in their care.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 18/02/2020 | Interim | Declined in effectiveness |
| 04/09/2019 | Full | Requires improvement to be good |
| 15/05/2019 | Full | Inadequate |
| 08/08/2018 | Full | Requires improvement to be 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. <p>(Regulation 6(1)(2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iv))</p> | 31/03/2020 |
| <p>The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; | 31/03/2020 |

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| <p>regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care; ensure that each child— is enabled to provide feedback to, and raise issues with, a relevant person about the support and services that the child receives; has access to the home's children's guide, and the home's complaints procedure, when the child's placement in the home is agreed and throughout the child's stay in the home; and is given appropriate advocacy support; ensure that an explanation is given to each child as soon as reasonably practicable after the child's arrival about— ensure that the views of each relevant person are taken into account, so far as reasonably practicable, before making a decision about the care or welfare of a child. (Regulation 7(1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(b)(d)(iii)(e))</p> | |
| <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to</p> | <p>31/03/2020</p> |

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| <p>the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11(1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(viii)(ix)(x))</p> | |
| <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— 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation (1)(2)(i)(ii)(v))</p> | 31/03/2020 |
| <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— 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— 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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(2)(a)(f))</p> | 18/06/2020 |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;</p> | 31/03/2020 |

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| that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child. (Regulation 14(a)(b)(i)(f)) | |
| The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b)) | 31/03/2020 |
| Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— injury to any person (including the child); serious damage to the property of any person (including the child); or a child who is accommodated in a secure children's home from absconding from the home. Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)) | 31/03/2020 |
| 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; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and 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)) | 18/06/2020 |
| 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— 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; | 31/03/2020 |

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| <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure ('the user'), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; and</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; and</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 35(1)(3)(a)(b)(c))</p> | |
| <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 each entry.</p> <p>(Regulation 36(1)(b)(c))</p> | 31/03/2020 |
| <p>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;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child—</p> <p>is instigated; or</p> <p>concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>there is any other serious incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>(Regulation 40(4))</p> | 31/03/2020 |

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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: Post vacant

Inspectors

Lisa Mulcahy, social care inspector

Miss Marina Tully, social care inspector

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