

1247212

Assurance visit

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 was appointed in April 2020. He has not yet submitted his application to Ofsted.

Visit dates: 13 to 14 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 18 February 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Declined in effectiveness

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Two children currently live at this home and they are generally well cared for by staff. The inspector observed friendly relationships between the children and staff. The children are positive about staff and they told the inspector that staff ask them what activities they like to do and what food they like to eat.

Staff understand children's relationships with their families and friends and support them to have safe contact with them. This support has continued during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional local restrictions came into place when this visit was undertaken. The staff managed this situation well by explaining the new restrictions to the child and arranging a safe plan for him to visit his family. This ensures that children maintain relationships with people who are important to them.

One child attends college for two days a week. This is significant progress for this child because he told the inspector that he has not attended school for two and a half years. He told the inspector that he enjoys his course. This means that staff are supporting the child to make positive progress in education.

The manager and staff work with other professionals, including a therapist from coastal child and adolescent therapeutic services, to support children's emotional needs. This means that children receive specialised support that is relevant to their individual needs. This support has continued during the COVID-19 pandemic. The therapist told the inspector that the children engage and that they are making positive progress.

The safety of children

Some of the staff know the children's risks and they demonstrate an understanding of children's current risks. Children's risk assessments are colour coded to represent the level of risk. This is helpful for staff to differentiate the risks to individual children. However, risk assessments do not always include strategies to help staff manage these risks, such as how to safely support children who return home under the influence of unknown substances.

Children told the inspector that staff help them understand how to keep safe. This is in relation to COVID-19 and cannabis misuse.

There has not always been sufficient staff to care for one child on a two-to-one basis as stipulated in the child's deprivation of liberty order. This means that the child's day-to-day care is not always delivered to keep her safe. A requirement has been made to reflect this shortfall.

The provider cannot demonstrate that safe recruitment processes are consistently in place. Some staff have gaps in their employment history and the provider cannot demonstrate that these have been addressed. Furthermore, there are gaps in references because they do not always include information in relation to any previous safeguarding or disciplinary issues in respect of staff. A requirement has been made to reflect this shortfall.

Since the last inspection there has not been any incidents of physical restraint. This is positive because it means that staff are managing incidents effectively.

Leaders and managers

An acting manager is managing the home. He has been managing the home since the home reopened in June 2020 and he is not yet registered with Ofsted. At this visit, the acting manager told the inspector that he would complete his application. A requirement has been made to address this shortfall.

The acting manager cannot always demonstrate that he knows children well. For example, he did not know one child's contact arrangements with his family and the external agency that is involved with the child.

Children's plans and documents are not reviewed effectively. This is because the manager does not have robust monitoring and review systems in place. The manager recognises this area needs to improve. A requirement has been made to reflect this shortfall.

There have been changes in the staff team, which has meant children have not been cared for by a consistent team of staff. One child told the inspector that there are lots of agency staff and that for two weeks she did not know a member of staff. Rotas in the home do not always demonstrate a consistent staff team. A requirement has been made to reflect this shortfall.

Recording within the home needs to improve to ensure that all staff sign and date all children's case records, including children's risk assessments. A requirement has been made to reflect this shortfall.

The acting manager has not sent the statement of purpose to Ofsted as stipulated in regulation. This means that Ofsted does not know who is working at the home. A requirement has been made to reflect this shortfall.

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 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>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(v)(b))</p>	15/01/2021
<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</p> <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p>	15/01/2021

<p>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.</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(e)(f)(h))</p>	
<p>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.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.</p> <p>(Regulation 16 (1)(3)(a)(b))</p>	15/01/2021
<p>The registered person must appoint a person to manage the children's home if—</p> <p>there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and</p> <p>the registered provider—</p> <p>is an organisation or a partnership;</p> <p>does not satisfy regulation 28; or</p> <p>is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii))</p>	15/01/2021
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p>	15/01/2021

<p>the individual is of integrity and good character;</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.</p> <p>(Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(3)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p>	
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry.</p> <p>(Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p>	15/01/2021

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1247212

Registered provider: Exceptional Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Susan Rolfe

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Catherine Fargin, Social Care Inspector

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