

1273769

Registered provider: Oak Childcare Plus

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children who have experienced childhood instability leading to trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The home was registered with Ofsted in November 2018. The manager has a level 5 qualification in leadership and management.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, Ofsted suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Ofsted last visited this home on 26 January 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 April 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

Requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

Requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 17 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/02/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
07/05/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

This is the home's first full inspection since May 2019. The home received a monitoring visit in January 2021. At the time of this inspection, three children lived at the home.

Managers and staff have failed to help children keep their bedrooms clean and tidy. Despite improvements being made to the communal areas, managers have not ensured that improvements have been made to children's personal space. For example, one child's requests to have broken drawers replaced in his bedroom have not been actioned for over two months. The same bedroom also has hazards because screws stick out of a wardrobe door where the handle has broken away. This lack of prompt action by staff does not help children to strengthen their sense of security and belonging and have pride in their bedroom.

Children's records do not include all essential information from their placing authority. For example, the manager has failed to gain copies of a child's up-to-date care plan since he moved into the home. This is despite two reviews of the child's care plan in that time. This means that staff will be unaware of current information relating to children's plans.

Children build trusted and secure relationships with core staff. Children informed the inspector that they have adults around them that they trust and can speak to if they are upset or worried. This helps children to feel confident about their relationships with staff and supports their progress.

Staff promote children's education. Because of this proactive approach, all three children attend school regularly. The good communication between staff and children's teachers helps to ensure that children's emotional needs are understood and sensitively managed. This supports children's learning.

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

Previously identified shortfalls in the use of restraint remain. The registered manager has again failed to identify that a restraint was not used by staff as a last resort. For

example, a child damaged property by ripping off a blind from a window and then throwing it onto the floor. The child was then restrained after the incident of damage had occurred and so it is not clear what threat or risk the child posed at that point. It is not clear what other measures staff had used to try to de-escalate the situation. As a result, it is difficult to understand why restraint is used and whether this measure is reasonable and proportionate. Some improvements are noted; for example, children and staff involved in a restraint incident are given the opportunity to express their feelings about the experience of the restraint.

The registered manager does not always ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed. The employment history of new staff has not been established and when there are issues with references around conduct, managers have not shown professional curiosity to follow these up to seek clarity. This has the potential to result in staff working in the home who are not suitable to do so.

Risk assessments are clear and include the relevant information. The registered manager regularly reviews and updates these to include up-to-date information. This means that there is clear and effective guidance for staff to keep children safe.

For the most part, children receive help and support to manage their behaviour and feelings safely. Children benefit from spending individual time with their key workers. For example, when there was an issue of bullying in the home, staff responded with clear boundaries about what is acceptable behaviour. Prompt responses to issues of concern promote children's well-being and sense of security.

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

Management arrangements at the home have not always been effective. The requirement raised at the monitoring visit has not been met. As a result, managers do not take prompt action to bring about improvement in aspects of behaviour management.

The registered manager has have failed to ensure that all staff receive supervision in line with the organisation's supervision policy. One member of staff had not received formal supervision for a period of four months. This lack of oversight leaves managers unable to demonstrate how they have supported staff to reflect on and improve their practice, to ensure that children receive consistently good and safe care.

The home does not have enough staff to meet the children's needs. The registered manager has had to rely on agency staff to fill these gaps for a period of four months. This means there is a lack of continuity of care for the children.

Staff are provided with a variety of training and development opportunities to further their knowledge to support children and help keep them safe. However, not all staff have received training to help them meet the specific needs of the children in the home. This includes online safety and anti-bullying. The registered manager has also

not received training around safer recruitment, despite being responsible for the recruitment of staff. This leaves staff and managers without the essential skills and knowledge for their roles in safeguarding children

Children know how to make a complaint. Staff and managers respond swiftly when children raise an issue. Staff are provided with the tools to manage allegations effectively. This good support enables staff to understand the impact of abuse and neglect and how to respond to keep children safe and protected.

A new management structure is now in place at the home and managers have begun to make improvements. Managers accepted the findings of this inspection and have started to address the shortfalls.

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>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to receiving statutory documents for each child.</p>	11 June 2021
<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>	11 June 2021

<p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the condition of one child's bedroom.</p>	
<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>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(d)(e))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the home being understaffed and training requirements to meet the needs of each child.</p>	<p>11 June 2021</p>
<p>Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing—</p> <p>injury to any person (including the child);</p> <p>serious damage to the property of any person (including the child); or</p> <p>a child who is accommodated in a secure children's home from absconding from the home.</p> <p>Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the use of physical intervention. This is a repeat requirement.</p>	<p>11 June 2021</p>

<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 an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home,</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <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>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)(b) (3)(a)(b)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the safer recruitment checks that are required to be completed, in relation to employed and external agency staff.</p>	<p>11 June 2021</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to staff receiving supervision in line with organisation's own policies.</p>	<p>11 June 2021</p>

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: 1273769

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Oak Childcare Plus

Responsible individual: Darren Smallman

Registered manager: Simon Chandler

Inspector

Kev Brammer, Social Care Inspector

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