

# 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 children who can no longer live at home. The home caters for three children in the main part of the house and one child in the attached apartment.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 22 March 2021.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021. We last visited this setting on 13 October 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the provider.

## Inspection dates: 19 and 20 January 2022

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 18 February 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Declined in effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** Ofsted issued an emergency suspension notice after a declined effectiveness judgement on 18 February 2020. A monitoring visit was completed on 3 April 2020 and the suspension notice remained in place. A further monitoring visit was completed on 7 May 2020 and the suspension notice was lifted.

## 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

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

The manager and staff have high aspirations for children. Children make good progress in all areas of their lives. They achieve improved outcomes that prepare them for their transition into adulthood so that they can cope with the challenges of maintaining good health, keeping themselves safe, and managing their emotions and behaviours, so that they can build and sustain relationships.

Children benefit from good routines that support their attendance and engagement in education. The children said that they were happy to be back at school and college now that the COVID-19 restrictions had been lifted. One child excitedly told the inspector about his work experience at an allotment. Another child said that she was enjoying her hair and beauty course at college. The manager and staff maintain regular communication with education professionals, which means that appropriate information is shared. Therefore, the most appropriate support and intervention is in place to ensure that the children's education needs are met well.

The manager and staff have a good understanding of the children's health and development needs. They ensure that children attend routine health appointments and that they seek specialist help when required. Children are encouraged and supported to engage in social and recreational activities that promote a healthier lifestyle.

The contact children have with their family is of significant importance to them, and the manager and staff work hard to promote this. The manager and staff have liaised effectively with placing local authorities and parents to allow the children to have unsupervised contact with their parents and family. The staff ensure that contact is meaningful and safe and is always in the best interests of the child.

Several children are reaching the age of adulthood. The staff at the home have been proactive in supporting the children's transitions and increasing their independence skills.

Relationships between the children, the manager and staff, and parents and other professionals are generally positive. An Independent Reviewing Officer said, 'The manager and staff compliment the social worker's work with the child.' A social worker said, 'She (the child) has developed immensely, and she has made huge steps within her care plan.'

The home environment is warm and welcoming. The children have been involved in the décor of the home. Therefore, it feels like a family home, and the children were proud of their surroundings and bedrooms.

## **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Safeguarding practice at the home is good. All staff have received safeguarding training and additional supportive training, such as county lines, self-injurious behaviour and child sexual exploitation, which is refreshed regularly. Staff demonstrated to the inspector that they have the knowledge to support children, and that they can identify early warning signs of involvement.

The manager has identified in the safer area location assessment risks that are associated with the home's proximity to a farm, a main road and a bridge. However, this information was not used to fully inform the placement decision in respect of the children or whether this proximity to risk would be an issue. Currently, this has not had an adverse impact on the children's safety. However, if it is not addressed, it has the potential to do so.

Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Any allegations or complaints are dealt with quickly and effectively. Children who spoke with the inspector said that they feel safe and listened to.

Children respond to consistent boundaries, which helps them to develop a clear sense of right and wrong. Staff spend time talking to children, and they respond well to incentives and rewards. Consequently, there have been no incidents of restraint, and consequences are kept to a minimum. Similarly, there have been no incidents of children going missing from the home. Clear protocols are in place should an incident occur.

Children's risks are well understood by staff, including risks around children's mobile phones and the internet. Assessments consider children's unsafe and risk-taking behaviours, and are thorough and individualised to the child. They are regularly updated and reflect recent incidents of concern. Triggers for behaviours are clearly documented and considered. This supports effective risk management and increases children's safety. This is reflected in the significant reduction of some risks that children presented when placed at this home. For example, some children had previous histories of being missing from placements, were at risk from child criminal exploitation and with high levels of damage to property. Due to the additional staff support, keyworker sessions, psychological support and involvement from specialised safeguarding professionals, such as the child sexual exploitation team, children no longer display these behaviours or have significantly reduced them.

Leaders and managers have investigated significant incidents in line with the relevant policies and procedures. Information relating to these incidents has been appropriately shared with those responsible for the child and the designated officer where required. However, not all significant incidents have been notified to the regulator in a timely manner. This prevents the regulator from having good oversight of the home.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Previously, the company had struggled to maintain good outcomes for children. However, they have taken suitable action to address this. For example, there is a new manager and a new staff team.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in March 2021. He has extensive experience of managing children's homes and overseeing them. His vision for the home's development is clear and demonstrates his commitment to the staff and children, and the continued improvement of the home. Monitoring and review systems are robust and support the manager to identify the home's strengths and weaknesses.

The manager understands the plans in place for the children. He recognises the importance of monitoring the progress that the children are making. Good records are kept, and they include the children's wishes, feelings and views. This helps the manager to understand the positive impact that living at the home has on the children, and he is quick to take appropriate action if suitable progress is not being made. However, the children's files are cumbersome because old information has not been archived. This means that children and staff may not have the most up-to-date information available to them.

Staff feel supported by the manager, and they recognise the improvement he has made in the short time he has been working at the home. One member of staff said, 'The home is unrecognisable from previous years. All the staff work as a team and have the children at the focal point in everything that they do. It is a pleasure to come to work now.'

Seven members of staff have a relevant childcare qualification. Three members of staff have their level 5 in leadership and management. Seven staff are at different stages of completing their award.

Staff receive regular supervision and attend monthly team meetings that enable them to reflect on their practice. They share good practice examples to enhance their knowledge and skills. For example, the staff have been discussing deprivation of liberty orders in recent staff meetings. Therefore, staff understand their roles and responsibilities in complying with these orders. Furthermore, they receive regular training and development opportunities to support their continuous professional development. Consequently, children benefit by receiving a good quality of care.

The manager and staff work proactively and positively with professionals and parents. Collaborative working results in the children receiving the best possible care to meet their individual needs. Children were extremely positive about the manager and staff and the progress that they had made. This was echoed by professionals spoken to as part of this inspection.

The requirements made at the assurance visit in October 2020 have been addressed. Staffing complements the needs of the children, safer recruitment policies and procedures are followed, monitoring and review systems ensure continuous development, the statement of purpose has been updated, all documents are signed and dated, and there is a registered manager at the home.

## 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 registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>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 incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>A notification made under this regulation—</p> <p>must include details of—</p> <p>the matter;</p> <p>the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and</p> <p>any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter;</p> <p>must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e)(5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))</p>	31 March 2022

## Recommendations

- The registered person should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Specifically, the registered person should consider the local community risks, identified in the safer area report, when considering new referrals to the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- Children should be encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents'. This is specifically in relation to the structure of the children's files. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)

## 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:** 1247212

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Exceptional Care Limited

**Registered provider address:** Exceptional Care Limited, Malthouse Business Centre, Southport Road, Ormskirk L39 1QR

**Responsible individual:** Susan Rolfe

**Registered manager:** Timothy Snelling

## Inspector

Pam Nuckley, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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