

2503142

Registered provider: Solace Care Partners Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run home that is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home was registered on 10 April 2019 and this is the first inspection of this service.

The registered manager is currently on maternity leave and the service is being managed by an interim manager.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 July 2019

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 and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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First inspection since registration.		
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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
13: The leadership and management standard (1) The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (a) 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)(a)(b)(2)(a))	14/10/2019
5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met: In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— (a) seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; (b) seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; (c) 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; and (d) seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5(a)(b)(c)(d))	14/10/2019

Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4) To strengthen practice in this area, the home must, prior to admission, consider how they can manage known behaviours and be resilient through crisis to reduce the risk of unplanned endings.
- The behaviour management policy should set out how staff are trained and supported to meet the child's needs. Regulations 13(2)(d) and (e) require children's homes to employ a sufficient number of suitably qualified, skilled and experienced persons in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.37)
- The relevant plan may include a strategy for a particular type of care, treatment or intervention (for example therapy relating to neglect or abuse). The care staff will need to understand the purpose of any such care and the way in which the past experiences of abuse or neglect may manifest itself in the day to day life of the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.15) To strengthen practice in this area, the home's care and support plans must clearly describe the interventions and support provided by staff and evidence how this is helping children and young people make progress.
- Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. If no education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge them to meet the child's needs under regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person must ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to: respond to the health needs of children; administer basic first aid and minor illness treatment; help children to manage long-term conditions and where necessary meet specific individual health needs arising from a disability, chronic condition or other complex needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.12) In particular, the home's support plans for children and young people should highlight relevant health issues and specify what steps are needed to promote health.

Inspection judgements

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

The outcomes for children and young people in the home have not been consistently positive. The children and young people who have left the home have done so in an unplanned way. This is, in part, because of poor matching. The two children and young people currently living in the home are making limited progress.

Staff do not consistently challenge children and young people to maintain structured routines. As a result, their engagement in education and constructive activities is limited and they are not reaching their full potential.

The provider does not provide enough challenge to the professional network to inject a sense of urgency into care planning. For example, one young person has been living in the home for four months and there is no clear plan for him to access an education provision for next term.

Staff offer a range of activities as part of a daily plan. Children and young people seldom engage in any of these activities, and therefore these plans have little meaning or impact in terms of promoting constructive routines and activities.

Staff support children and young people to access health services when they need them. They have been less successful in helping children and young people access therapeutic services. Staff undertake direct work with children and young people to help them to make safer choices and to learn to make sense of their circumstances.

Care plans for children and young people contain comprehensive information and assessments of their needs. However, they do not clearly identify how they are supporting children and young people to make small steps to achieve progress. In one example, a young person's health condition was not identified in any of the home's relevant plans. Staff were not clear about the support and advice he needed to manage this condition.

The home is well presented, clean and homely. The staff team members are diverse and can meet the needs of children and young people from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds. This helps both children and young people to build relationships and feel settled in the home.

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

The children and young people currently living in the home have complex needs and a history of being at risk of harm. The behaviours that placed them at risk have been reduced and staff have been successful in helping them reduce the number of times they go missing from the home.

Staff take prompt action when children and young people are missing from the home. In one example they obtained important information about a person who was potentially exploiting a young person in the home. However, staff did not take any action to escalate concerns when this information was not acted upon urgently by the professional network.

Staff are passionate about their work and form positive relationships with children and young people. A placing social worker reported that one young person was more stable here than in previous placements. She felt that the positive relationship between the young person and some staff had helped significantly reduce incidents of challenging behaviour.

Despite this, the outcomes for the two young people who recently left the home were poor. One of them was assessed to be at risk of exploitation and the risks to her increased when another young person was admitted to the home with similar vulnerabilities. The provider did not fully assess the risks of placing these two young people together.

The staff team is relatively new and its members come with a range of previous experiences and training. They have not all completed behaviour management training. Not all staff have completed core training in key areas of safeguarding, such as risks of exploitation, gangs or radicalisation. This limits their ability to support children and young people who are vulnerable in these areas to stay safe.

There are enough staff on duty to monitor and support the children and young people. Staff are vigilant and know how to act upon concerns.

Staff are recruited in line with safe recruitment procedures.

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

The registered manager of the home has been on maternity leave since shortly after the home began operating. The acting manager has previous experience in the role and holds the required leadership and management qualifications. He has applied to Ofsted to register as manager. He has had a relatively short time in post to make a significant impact on the service.

The acting manager of the home is not providing enough direction and challenge to staff or the professional network. Staff are inconsistent in the way that they help children and young people establish structured routines.

The home's statement of purpose describes how placements are well planned and that the provider takes all reasonable steps to get full information on each child and young person prior to admission. In practice, this does not happen and all admissions to the home have been on an emergency basis. This means that insufficient information is available for the provider to be sure that they can meet the needs of individual children

and young people within the group of residents already living in the home.

The provider works effectively with the professional network in terms of sharing information and contributing to care planning. They do not, however, press the professional network and escalate concerns if such plans drift. This makes it hard for staff and for children and young people to have a clear sense of purpose and commitment to care plans.

The provider has a workforce development plan in place to identify and deliver core training to staff. However, this training has not yet taken place. This means that not all staff have the training they need to deliver high-quality support to children and young people with complex needs.

The acting manager is visible and accessible to staff. Staff spoken with said that they appreciate the support he provides. Staff have regular formal supervision. This is a useful space for them to reflect, learn and to improve practice.

The acting manager is also accessible to children and young people. He spends time with them, builds positive relationships and knows them well.

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: 2503142

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: Solace Care Partners Limited

Registered provider address: Wentworth House, 350 Eastern Avenue, Ilford, Essex IG2 6NW

Responsible individual: Umer Ahmed

Registered manager: Sherene Longmore

Inspector

Lee Kirwin, social care inspector

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