

2503142

Registered provider: Solace Care Partners Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties. The provider also runs another children's home, which is located next door.

The home's manager has been in post since November 2020 and was registered by Ofsted in January 2021.

There were three children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

This inspection was conducted on site and involved meetings with children and staff. Written and telephone discussions were held with placing authority social workers and other professionals, including two therapists involved in the care of children. A staff questionnaire was also shared for those staff who were not working but wished to contribute their views.

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

We last visited this setting on 30 September 2020, to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 April 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/01/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
23/07/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children form close and trusting relationships with staff and recognise the positive impact of staff's help and support. Staff strive to limit the impact of the pandemic by arranging creative activities in the home. One child painted a canvas with staff which was proudly displayed in her bedroom. Feedback from key professionals is positive. One psychiatrist commented, 'The home offers very good holistic care.'

Effective key-work sessions help to support children. Staff use their relationships with children to explore sensitive areas of risk, such as the possible triggers for drinking alcohol. Children respond well and learn through sanctions, how to manage their own behaviour.

Children benefit from an effective and consistent behaviour management system. Staff make good use of written contracts to remind children of the consequences of poor behaviour. One child said that daily incentive charts help her to focus on the benefits of consistent positive behaviour.

Children enjoy good access to advocacy. An independent advocate recently challenged a local authority's decision to prematurely end a child's placement. The resulting extension to the placement allowed the home time to engage the child in a programme of independence work. Following this, she successfully moved on to a less supportive setting and continues to maintain contact with staff.

Staff recognise the value of children maintaining relationships with family and friends. One child spoke fondly about staff who drove a long distance to support family time and the positive impact this had on her placement stability.

Educational achievement is prioritised. When children first move in, staff strive to access appropriate educational provision. This includes helping children with applications and considering other options such as voluntary work.

Staff regularly involve children in decision making in the home. For example, children were recently involved in choosing the colour scheme for the home's redecoration and were part of the interview panel during a recent round of staff recruitment. This offered valuable insight and supported the process effectively.

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

Staff have a good understanding of the trauma that children have experienced and ways in which this may have an impact on their behaviour. Children have access to a wide range of therapies, which include animal and art therapy. Incidents of children self-harming have decreased as a result of building trusting relationships with staff. One child recently handed in a sharp object to staff as they feared they might harm themselves with it.

Multi-agency work is effective. For example, when late-night mobile phone use was becoming problematic for a child, the home liaised with the placing authority to secure the legal power to remove the phone and allow the child to settle at night.

Staff manage incidents effectively and enforce boundaries well. This brings consistency to children's lives. However, there was one incident of restraint practice which was in breach of regulation. This was an isolated incident and there was limited impact on the child concerned.

Risk management plans are of good quality and are detailed. They reflect children's individual complex needs and behaviour triggers. This helps staff to follow the plans easily and helps children to reduce risk-taking behaviours.

Staff have received safeguarding training and put their learning into practice by working creatively to support and protect children. When concerns arise, these are shared with key professionals, such as the youth offending services and specialist gang workers. This ensures more effective safeguarding.

Case records mostly evidence the progress achieved by children. However, some case records lack important documents such as the local authority care plan and personal education plan. This limits the home's ability to plan care for children effectively.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Management of the home is supportive and effective. The registered manager has achieved significant progress since her appointment. All the previous requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed. The registered manager is experienced and holds the level 5 diploma in leadership and management. She is highly valued by both staff and children.

At present the registered manager is supported by one senior worker who acts as her deputy. The member of staff concerned has not completed any form of management training. This limits an understanding of the management role.

The registered manager has almost completely renewed the staff team. Only two staff members remain from before her appointment. This has created a talented and committed team who take pride in the progress achieved by children. One staff member commented, 'We are all really excited and are working together well.' At present, performance appraisal practice does not include the wishes and feelings of children, which limits its effectiveness.

Managers are ambitious and proactive on behalf of children. They are continually seeking new means of improving the support offered to children. Recently, this included paying for a programme of private tuition for a child when delays occurred with educational provision.

Managers have learned from past mistakes. The home has amended its processes for matching new children who come to live at the home, following a difficult experience. The home now routinely contacts previous placements and explores all possible risk factors, including gang association, prior to considering a child moving into the home. The impact is positive and evidenced by the suitability of the last three children who moved in and the peer dynamic in the home.

The most recent quality of care review, sent to Ofsted in October 2020, did not include any feedback from children or include a plan for the home's development. This shortfall limits Ofsted's oversight of 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
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). Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b) (2))	1 June 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure they oversee the welfare of the children in their care through observation and engagement with each child. In particular, feedback from young people should be evidenced in the management monitoring report. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.23)
- The registered person should ensure that the regulation 45, quality of care review clearly identifies any actions required for the next six months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policy on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, ensure that recordings offer a full account of events. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure all managers working in the children's home must have the qualification in regulation 28(2) within the relevant timescales listed in regulation 28(3). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)

- The registered person should ensure performance appraisals consider the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and the views of the young people in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 60, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person should ensure that any placing authority is challenged to provide a complete and current relevant plan. In particular, ensure that case files contain up-to-date care plans and personal education plans from the placing authority. This will inform care planning for the children concerned. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.5)

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: 2503142

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Solace Care Partners Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 2A, 420 Eastern Avenue, Ilford IG2 6NQ

Responsible individual: Umer Ahmed

Registered manager: Coca Stan

Inspectors

Barnaby Dowell, Social Care Inspector
Gulcin Ardic, Social Care Inspector

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