

2503142

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people. The home's statement of purpose states that the home cares for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The provider runs another children's home, which is located next door.

This home has not had a registered manager since February 2020.

Visit dates: 30 September to 1 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 13 January 2020

Previous inspection judgement: sustained 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

Young people experience safety, stability and positivity in their lives. They receive good-quality support from skilled and caring staff. Staff are able to meet young people's needs and promote their identities.

Young people develop close relationships with staff members. They also continue to develop their relationships with family members and friends. When appropriate, staff help young people to return to the care of their families or to the area they come from.

Staff place great significance on young people's education. They work closely with schools to support young people's learning, celebrate young people's achievements and help them to plan for a positive future.

Young people have opportunities to explore their interests and talents. Examples include young people engaging in photography, dance, music-making and gardening. This helps young people to develop their self-awareness and confidence.

Staff help young people to explore what equality and diversity mean for them. Staff talk with young people about justice and teach them how to express their views in safe and respectful ways. The progress that young people make in their ability to communicate more constructively has a positive impact on their overall development.

The home environment is of a high standard. However, the use of cameras inside the home undermines its homely feel and young people's right to privacy in their own home.

The safety of children

Staff have helped young people to turn their lives around, by assisting them to reduce their risky behaviours. Staff are committed to enhancing young people's safety, even when young people's engagement is limited and their progress is slow. The safeguarding culture is one of patience and tenacity, and collaboration with other professionals.

The home's positive environment helps young people to develop more constructive behaviours. Staff manage young people's challenging behaviours without the need to use physical interventions or to request support from the police. There have been no assaults on staff, even where young people have had a history of violence.

Staff understand the impact of neglect on young people and are able to support young people's emotional welfare. Staff help young people to learn to regulate their difficult feelings and strong emotions. There have been no self-harming incidents at the home.

Staff talk to young people about risks to their safety and advise young people on how they can keep themselves safer. Staff encourage young people to have their say and develop ownership of their own risk management plans. Staff help young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation to understand their vulnerability and engage in healthy relationships.

Staff share relevant information with professionals and are active participants at multi-disciplinary meetings. Staff champion young people's rights and are prepared to challenge professionals to do their best for young people. For example, staff intervention has supported the increase in return-home interviews provided by the placing authority, when young people return after going missing from the home.

Staff support young people at court hearings and work closely with the youth offending service to help steer young people away from crime. Although staff have a general awareness of the risks posed to young people by county lines, staff's understanding of the context in which county lines operate and how criminal exploitation takes place is less evident.

Leaders and managers

A new manager has been appointed and is applying to register with Ofsted. The home benefits from sharing supportive relationships with the children's home located next door and that home's registered manager. The responsible individual provides close oversight of the running of the setting.

Leaders and managers ensure that the focus of care is placed firmly on young people. The independent visitor understands the home's ethos and communicates openly with the home about any areas for improvement. The monthly monitoring reports contribute to the home's internal quality assurance processes and the development of more reflective practices.

The home uses an efficient recording system that makes monitoring easy. This system constantly refers to the quality standards and the children's homes regulations. Staff reported how helpful this is in enhancing their understanding of the legislative framework and what the quality standards mean in practice.

Staff are interested in learning more about how to look after young people and enhancing their own professional development. They have access to comprehensive online training opportunities, which they said had been helpful during the lockdown period. Since the restrictions have been eased, staff have received face-to-face training on a number of relevant topics.

The home has adapted well to the ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic and has continued to improve. However, the frequency of staff supervision is inconsistent, and there is a lack of timeliness when making notifications to Ofsted.

Leaders, managers and staff normally capture young people's views well. Since the last inspection, a significant amount of work has been completed to provide

evidence that young people have a voice. However, the report on the six-monthly review of care does not capture the views of children, families, professionals or staff. As a result, the requirement related to this has been repeated.

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
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d))	01/03/2021
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and	01/03/2021

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.

After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review (“the quality of care review report”).

The registered person must—

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(4)(a)(b)(5))

Recommendations

- Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed and recorded in the home’s workforce plan. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 43, paragraph 9.12).

Specifically, staff should have opportunities to gain better understanding of the links between county lines, child criminal exploitation and the National Referral Mechanism.

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.2).

Specifically, staff should have formal supervision on a regular basis.

- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. The system should cover the action that should be followed if the event arises at the weekend or on a public holiday. Notification must include details of the action taken by the home’s staff in

response to the event. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.12).

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2503142

Registered provider: Solace Care Partners Limited

Registered provider address: Solace Care Partners Ltd, 8th Floor, Wentworth House, 350 Eastern Avenue, Ilford, Essex IG2 6NW

Responsible individual: Umer Ahmed

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Seka Graovac, Social Care Inspector

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