

2503142

Registered provider: Solace Care Partners Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care for up to four children who may experience social or emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted on 10 April 2019. The current manager has applied to become registered in January 2024.

There was one child living in the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection date: 31 January 2024

Date of last inspection: 18 July 2023

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Some progress has been made since the last inspection with some requirements now met. For example, leaders now ensure that they have satisfactory references before staff start working in the home. In addition, staff have completed physical intervention training. Both these actions add to children's safety. Despite these improvements, action in other areas has been limited. This means that there is still considerable work required to ensure that the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection are achieved.

Staff build positive relationships with children. One child, who lives in the home, spoke about staff being fair and listening to them.

Staff support children to take their prescribed medication. However, medication records do not demonstrate suitable arrangements for the recording and safe administration of medication. This includes ensuring the timely re-ordering of children's medication before it runs out. Medication audits are insufficient and not conducted in a timely manner to identify and rectify this shortfall.

Managers and staff encourage children to access and engage in education. For one child, this has led to them successfully re-engaging in further education after a period of temporary exclusion. This helps children work towards their ambitions for the future.

Staff are alert to any risks that children may face, and these are clear in children's risk assessments. However, actions in behaviour support plans to help keep children safe and form positive relationships are not consistently updated after significant events or changes in children's circumstances. This means these plans do not reflect children's current needs.

Staff carry out room searches when necessary to safeguard children. However, the reason for these searches, and if children have given consent for them, is not clearly recorded. In addition, staff have not ensured that children know the difference between a room search and a health and safety check, which reduces their ability to consent to them. Staff also do not clearly record the actions they take if items that compromise children's safety are found. As such, leaders cannot be assured that appropriate action has been taken.

When children go missing, staff follow missing-from-care procedures and make determined efforts to remain in contact with children. When children return home, staff routinely talk with children to determine the reasons why they went missing and discuss any risks children may have been exposed to while away from the home.

Positive efforts have been made to ensure that staff have completed training in the use of restraint. However, all training to help meet the needs of children has not been completed. This includes areas such as medication administration, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation and self-harm. There is insufficient management oversight to ensure that the training necessary to help keep children safe is being completed when allocated to staff. This means that not all staff possess the necessary knowledge to effectively meet the needs of children.

The views of children are sought following incidents of restraint. However, these conversations with children involve staff who have physically participated in the incident. This approach compromises safeguarding practice and children's engagement.

Leaders do not keep accurate records of children who have been admitted to and moved out of the home. This means there are important gaps in records.

Leaders and managers have a realistic knowledge of the home's strengths and areas for improvement. For example, they recognise the need to improve the recording on children's records to reflect safeguarding practice in the home and children's current circumstances.

Managers acknowledge they need to review the quality of the care provided in the home, including the experiences of children living there. However, delays to managers' reviews have limited their effectiveness in evaluating the quality of care and children's outcomes. This is a missed opportunity to make the focused improvements that are needed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/07/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/09/2022	Full	Good
27/04/2021	Full	Good
13/01/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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, The 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 must ensure that — within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that debriefs with children after restraints are carried out by an independent person who was not involved in the incident of restraint. This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	31 March 2024
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, this refers to the registered person ensuring that any medication required for children is refilled before it runs out and that accurate records are kept of the administering of medication. This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	31 March 2024

The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff complete training necessary to meet the needs of the children in their care, such as on child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, self-harm and medication administration. This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	31 March 2024
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 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. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a))	31 March 2024
The registered manager must ensure that all employees—	31 March 2024

receive practice related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that there is an accurate record of admissions into and discharges from the home.	31 March 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that records of room searches demonstrate clearly whether the child has been asked for their permission and the grounds for the search. This recommendation was raised at the last inspection and is restated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, sanctions, if used, should be clearly recorded. This recommendation was raised at the last inspection and is restated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff continually assess the risks to each child and the arrangements to protect them. In particular, this includes the need to update behaviour support plans after any significant events involving children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2503142

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Solace Care Partners Limited

Registered provider address: Solace Care Partners Limited, Unit 2A, 420 Eastern Avenue, Ilford IG2 6NQ

Responsible individual: Umer Ahmed

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Andy Whippey, Social Care Inspector

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