

2503143

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 experience social and/or emotional difficulties. The home registered with Ofsted in October 2019. The registered manager post is vacant. At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home.

Inspection date: 9 February 2024

Date of last inspection: 17 October 2023

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At these inspections, the inspector evaluated:

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

Inspectors have 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 in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

At the time of the last inspection, there were no children living at the home. One young person moved into the home in November 2023.

Since the last inspection, some progress has been made against the requirements and recommendations that were raised. The home now has a detailed local area risk assessment, which highlights current risks in the locality, giving managers sufficient information to respond effectively. Recruitment processes have been strengthened and managers routinely explore gaps in applicants' employment histories. This helps to minimise the risk of unsuitable people being employed to work with children.

The child who is resident in the home has made steady progress since their admission, and the number of missing episodes and significant incidents has reduced.

Staff support children to attend medical appointments and ensure that they have access to specialist provision when necessary. Staff support children to take their prescribed medication. However, medication records do not include sufficient information to demonstrate the suitable arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration, and disposal of medication. Medication audits are undertaken but do not always pick up on these shortfalls in recording quickly enough.

Staff follow missing-from-home protocols, including reporting children who are missing to the police in a timely manner. Staff regularly contact children who are away from the home to check on their welfare and encourage them to return. When children return, staff mostly engage in productive conversations to understand why children go missing and any risks that children may have been exposed to. This shows children that staff are interested in their welfare and helps to keep children safe.

Children's risk assessments identify risks well, but they are not updated after episodes of children being missing or significant events. In addition, effective strategies and actions to mitigate against any risks are not reflected in behaviour support plans. This impairs staff's ability to manage behaviour and risks effectively.

Staff undertake relevant key-work sessions with children on a regular basis. These are well recorded and show good engagement and conversations with children. These sessions relate to a number of areas of children's experiences and include follow-up actions to be completed. These regular sessions help children to articulate any fears or worries they may have.

Regular house meetings enable children's voices to be heard, and children are actively involved in planning activities, menus, and events in the home.

Staff have put in place a daily planner, but it is not evident to what degree children participate in planned events. On the day of this assurance inspection, the resident child did not get up until the afternoon, meaning that the activities planned for the morning did not happen. This hampers children's social and educational development.

Not all staff have completed training to help them to meet the needs of children in their care. This includes safeguarding and exploitation training. This compromises staff's ability to meet the needs of children effectively.

Staff carry out room searches when necessary to safeguard children. These are not well recorded. It is not always clear what the purpose of these searches are, and the difference between a room search and a health and safety check of a bedroom. Staff also complete welfare checks on children, but records do not show the frequency or purpose of these checks. In addition, when staff knock on children's bedroom doors to check on them, staff do not take further action if they get no response. This does not help staff to know if children's welfare is secure. Furthermore, as a result of poor-quality records, it is not clear how information is being used from these events to keep children safe.

Staff do not always receive regular and effective supervision that focuses on the needs of children and their own development. This means that managers have inconsistent oversight of the work undertaken with children and are not able to identify staff's development needs.

Team meetings are not well recorded or completed in a timely manner. They do not identify any discussions about how the needs of children can be met, or any learning from incidents involving children. This reduces staff's opportunity to learn together about how they can better support children.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/10/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
24/01/2023	Full	Good
11/01/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
13/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(b)(d)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated, are robust and correctly identify risk levels and the strategies to help staff to manage and reduce children's individual risks. In addition, leaders and managers must ensure that when welfare checks are undertaken, staff take proactive steps to	31 March 2024

ensure children's well-being, including children being seen and spoken with.	
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 the administration of medication required for children is accurately recorded.	31 March 2024
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, when considering new children moving into the home, leaders and managers must fully consider the needs of children already living there alongside those of the children moving in, as well as whether the staff have the skills to meet the needs of all children in their care.	31 March 2024
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.	31 March 2024

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(f)) In particular, leaders and managers must monitor and improve the quality of children’s records, including records of key-work sessions, restraints, risk assessments and incidents. In addition, leaders and managers must ensure that staff receive the appropriate support and training to provide a good quality of care to children and ensure that their needs are met well. Leaders and managers must ensure that team meetings are held regularly and focus on staff development and child-related practice.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that all staff, including managers, receive regular and effective supervision, and that appraisals are carried out annually.	31 March 2024
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	31 March 2024

In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that all staff complete training that is 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.

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. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2503143

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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