

2548794

Registered provider: Seva Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a private provider and offers care and accommodation for five children. The home's statement of purpose states that the home cares for children who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and/or learning difficulties.

The home's manager was registered in March 2021 and the home was registered in July 2020.

There were two 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 one parent, placing authority social workers and other professionals, including a treating clinical psychologist. 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 to carry out an assurance visit on 15 December 2020. This report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 June 2021

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

Inspection judgements

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

The quality of children's care is limited due to an inexperienced and unsettled staff team with a high staff turnover. Children have experienced instability due to changes within the staff team. The lack of consistent staff has compromised the continuity and quality of care that children receive.

Despite this, children make progress and are supported by staff who provide them with a genuine sense of warmth and affection.

The home is a large, modern and spacious home. Each child benefits from having their own space which includes their bedroom, separate bathrooms and living areas. This allows them to develop their independence.

Staff help children to establish healthy lifestyles, for example supporting children with appropriate dietary advice. This is attributed to the hard work of staff in diversifying diets and encouraging children to prepare their own food. Further improvements include eliminating the need for sleeping medication for one child and helping them to sleep through the night.

Children enjoy positive time with their family in the home. The home's large garden provides opportunities for children to enjoy 'COVID-safe' family gatherings. This included a recent celebration of Eid and a child's birthday. Additionally, staff record children's progress and achievements via photo albums and share pictures with family members through social media.

Staff manage children's challenging behaviour well. Staff understand children's complex individual behaviours and take prompt action to support them, when necessary. An example of this is when children are unsettled due to too many people being in a room.

The use of physical intervention is appropriate. When restraint has been used, staff reflect well and reassess their techniques, to try to reduce the need for a restraint.

Educational achievement for children is positive and the home is supported by a specialist local school. One child who had not attended school for two years has recently started to attend. The child's social worker referred to this as being 'a great achievement.'

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

During the inspection, one child's bedroom was presented as a possible hazard as their wardrobe was not securely fitted and had signs of damage on the door. These concerns were rectified on the second day of this inspection.

Children benefit from improved advocacy provision, and independent advice and support is now routinely offered to children. In addition, staff use their knowledge of, and relationship with, children to advocate for them effectively. For example, staff recently challenged the levels of prescribed medication that one child was receiving and the negative effects that this appeared to have on the child's behaviour. The child's prescription was subsequently amended, resulting in an improvement in their behaviour.

Multi-agency work is effective. Staff monitor children's behaviour and feedback any concerns to children's social workers. For example, staff report observations from children's time with their family to allocated social workers. This ensures that information is shared promptly, and that action is taken to support children.

Managers have ensured that the quality of risk assessments has been improved. Assessments now give clear guidance to staff regarding possible signs of agitation that individual children may exhibit, and the strategies identified to support staff to calm children. Children respond well to simple strategies including holding hands with staff or taking deep breaths.

The staffing levels at night are insufficient. Although children's risk assessments state that they require two-to-one staffing levels, the home was only providing one waking night member of staff. Managers acknowledged this error and commissioned the addition of an extra staff member during the inspection. Although no harm was caused to children, the failure to follow risk assessments compromises children's safety.

Notifications of serious events are sent to Ofsted as required. One notification has been received since the last inspection and this evidenced a coordinated and appropriate response from staff.

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

The registered manager has been an integral part of the development of the home since her arrival in March 2021.

The staff team remain inexperienced. The registered manager is the only member of staff who has achieved the required national qualification for children's residential care. One staff member has not completed their qualification within the required timescale.

The inexperience of the staff team is exacerbated by high levels of staff turnover. Half of the staff team have left the home since the last inspection. Furthermore, one staff member was promoted to a senior position without a performance appraisal or full assessment of their ability to undertake the role.

Staff succession planning remains poor in the home, despite this being raised as a concern at the last inspection. The home lacks a deputy manager, and this places undue pressure on the registered manager who remains 'on call' throughout the weekend and working week.

Key documents such as children's behaviour support plans are not updated appropriately and lack details, such as the outcome of recent specialist assessments. This presents a confusing picture of the progress achieved by children.

Training provision for staff is variable. Despite a clinical psychologist and a psychotherapist offering bespoke training, staff lack key training in areas such as the use of social story books for children. This limits their ability to engage with children.

Practice relating to the admission of children is improved. One child has been admitted since the last inspection. The admission was preceded by a full assessment of suitability and meetings with the child and their family and in-depth planning with the placing local authority.

Despite the shortfalls found at this inspection, staff morale is positive. Staff reported that they receive improved levels of supervision and management support. One staff member remarked on the 'fantastic opportunity and enjoyment the home offers', and the happiness they felt seeing the progress and achievement of children.

The recruitment of staff is safe. The registered manager ensures that all references are fully verified and any gaps in employment history are explored. This helps to ensure the safety of children.

The registered manager has addressed most of the requirements and recommendations made at the previous inspection. One requirement relating to staff training and one recommendation regarding succession planning are repeated for this inspection.

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 must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; 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)(a)(b))	1 September 2021
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)) This relates to ensuring that staff have the specialist training to ensure they can meet the needs of children.	1 September 2021
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. 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;	1 September 2021

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)) This relates to leaders and managers ensuring that they maintain a consistent staff team with the right qualifications, skill set and experience to meet the needs of each child in the home.	
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual— does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b))	1 September 2021

Recommendations

- 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, to ensure that risk assessments are updated with key information regarding the specialist assessments that have taken place and record any recommendations. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure the home has a plan in place to maintain effective management when the manager is absent, off duty or on leave. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards (2015)', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

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: 2548794

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Seva Childcare Ltd

Registered provider address: 71-75 Shelton Street, Covent Garden, London
WC2H 9JQ

Responsible individual: Mahesh Kotecha

Registered manager: Kimberley Bennett

Inspector

Barnaby Dowell, Social Care Inspector

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