

2595182

Registered provider: Solace Care 7kings Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that provides care to children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted on 19 October 2020.

The registered manager post has been vacant since March 2022. A new manager has been appointed and has submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

There were two children living in the home at the time of this inspection. The inspector spoke to both children.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 28 April 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/04/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The managers and staff understand that children need their carers to see beyond their presenting behaviours and they demonstrate resilience in the way they respond to challenges and significant incidents. Both children's social workers told the inspector that when staff attend meetings following serious incidents, they remain focused on supporting the child rather than the behaviour, including damage to the property. This promotes a sense of security and stability for children.

Children are encouraged to express their views about their day-to-day care through key-work sessions, children's meetings and attending statutory reviews. Children also support the recruitment of new staff and attend staff interviews, where possible. The manager has made a referral for an independent advocate for one child to ensure that their voice is heard in respect of complex decisions about their care.

The manager and staff work hard to promote children's education and encourage their attendance. One child is in full-time education. The other child is supported by a home tutor while waiting for a school placement.

Children are supported by staff to live healthy lifestyles. Staff ensure that children have access to specialist advice and support from child and adolescent mental health services, where necessary. Children are encouraged and supported to attend health appointments. However, both children have refused to take their medication at times, which led to increased incidents of challenging behaviour and disengagement with staff and education. The manager is liaising with the relevant agencies to address this.

Children are encouraged to participate in activities in the home and the community. They are supported to follow their interests, including art and cooking. Children enjoyed a recent trip to Southend-on-Sea. However, one child tends to spend significant lengths of time gaming or watching TV, which staff find difficult to address.

Parents are welcomed into the home, and staff support and arrange for children to spend time with their family when it is safe to do so.

The home is clean and comfortable and is decorated to a good standard. However, the garden contains some items broken during a recent incident. The manager has requested for the items to be removed and the damage to be repaired.

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

Safeguarding practice at the home needs to be strengthened. The staff response to managing risks of self-harm, strategies for managing behaviour, staff's understanding of whistle-blowing procedures, and how to effectively manage allegations, require improvement to be consistently good.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that there is an effective method for monitoring that all staff have read and fully understood the risk assessments for children. Furthermore, one child's missing-from-care protocol does not include specific actions to help staff to manage and respond to this risk. This does not demonstrate that children receive consistent and effective responses to manage and reduce risk.

Until recently, not all staff had received training on how to safely restrain children. Consequently, staff have not been able to manage and prevent incidents of children hurting themselves or others, or damaging property. This has resulted in the police being called to intervene and support staff to manage children's behaviour and risks.

Children's risk assessments are regularly reviewed and include all known risks. However, staff's responses to children's individual needs and vulnerabilities need to improve. On occasions, when a child spoke of self-harming ideations, welfare checks were not carried out to ensure that the child was safe. This resulted in the child sustaining self-injuries. In addition, one child was able to access medication and take an overdose in the presence of staff. This does not demonstrate proactive and consistently effective safeguarding practice.

When allegations were made by children, they were addressed promptly and appropriately. However, one staff member did not demonstrate a good understanding of what to do if an allegation is made against staff. Furthermore, a second member of staff did not demonstrate a good knowledge of whistle-blowing procedures. This does not demonstrate that staff are able to respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns relating to other staff and managers.

Recruitment processes are not consistently safe. For example, the discrepancy between the employment history and references was not explored for one staff member.

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

There have been changes in the leadership and management of the home since the last inspection. The new manager will soon be supported by a deputy manager. Additionally, the manager is supported by leaders in the organisation.

The quality of the children's records needs improvement. For example, updated risk assessments are not included in children's paper files or folders for agency staff, and care plans do not include set timescales for actions or signatures of the key worker. This does not promote consistent drive to improve practice. The registered individual

reported that they have plans in place to introduce new processes to improve the monitoring of the quality of care provided in the home.

Staff report that they feel valued and supported. However, the frequency of supervision provided to staff, including new staff, is not in line with the home's statement of purpose. This compromises the management oversight of staff practice and development. Furthermore, not all staff have completed relevant training in important areas of practice. This compromises the staff's ability to meet the needs of the children in their care.

Leaders and managers work well with other agencies and families to support the day-to-day care of children. However, the local authority care plan has not been obtained for one child. This compromises staff's understanding of the child's needs.

Leaders and managers have failed to consult with safeguarding partners when updating the review of premises. Furthermore, the review contains out-of-date information, some of which has not been updated since 2020. This does not equip staff to respond effectively to risks related to the location of the children's home.

Leaders and managers do not consistently notify Ofsted of all significant incidents as required. Ofsted was not informed in a timely manner of two serious safeguarding incidents. Furthermore, one safeguarding notification did not contain full information about the incident and the action taken by staff to reduce risks. This compromises the regulator's external oversight of the home.

Leaders and managers use learning from practice and feedback to improve the experiences and care of children. For example, the children's guide was amended in line with the recommendation of the monthly quality assurance reports completed by the independent person. The guide now includes details of the complaint procedure, advocacy support and contact information for the children's rights commissioner.

It has been a challenge for leaders and managers to recruit and retain staff. Recruitment of permanent staff is one of the areas that the registered manager is progressing to improve the quality and consistency of practice and to provide stability for children.

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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) In particular, this refers to the registered person ensuring:	4 October 2022

that the manager establishes systems to ensure that staff know and understand children's risk assessments and behaviour management plans; that missing-from-care protocols provide staff with clear strategies to manage risk; that room searches are carried out to remove dangerous items and prevent self-harm; and that welfare checks take place when there is a risk of self-harm.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e)) In particular, this refers to the registered person ensuring that all safeguarding notifications are completed without delay and include all relevant information.	11 October 2022
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)(c))	25 October 2022

The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2))	27 December 2022
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h)) In particular, this refers to the registered person ensuring that the monitoring and review systems lead to consistent improvement in the quality and consistency of recorded documents and that staff are provided with training necessary to meet the needs of the children in their care.	25 October 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they maintain good employment practice as set out in regulations 31-33. In particular, this relates to ensuring that all discrepancies in employment history and references are explored. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to recognise any signs that a child is at risk of harm. In particular, this relates to ensuring that staff are familiar with the home's procedures when an allegation is

made about a member of staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)

- The registered person should ensure that staff know and understand the home's internal whistle-blowing procedures through the induction process. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.9)
- The registered person should ensure that any placing authority is challenged to provide a complete and current relevant plan. In particular, this relates to ensuring that children's files contain up-to-date care plans. ('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: 2595182

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Solace Care 7kings Ltd

Registered provider address: Solace Care Morden Ltd, Unit 2A, 420 Eastern Avenue, Ilford, Essex IG2 6NQ

Responsible individual: Lynette Hitchen

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Aneta Wasilewska, Social Care Inspector

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