

2695213

Registered provider: Liv Children Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to two children who experience social and emotional difficulties due to their early childhood experiences. There was one child living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The home registered with Ofsted in October 2022. The registered manager post has been vacant since April 2023. A new manager is due to start working in the home and has submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 October 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 16 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

The home's first full inspection in May 2023 resulted in a judgement of requires improvement to be good. An assurance inspection was carried out on 31 October 2023 and no serious or widespread concerns were identified.

A monitoring visit was carried out in December 2023, following concerns raised regarding the quality of care provided by staff and the safeguarding of children in the home.

An assurance inspection was carried out on 12 February 2024 due to concerns relating to the safeguarding of, and quality of care provided to, a child living at the home. A notice of restriction was issued on 21 February 2024 due to concerns found at the inspection and further concerns that arose following the inspection.

A monitoring visit was carried out on 9 May 2024 to monitor the restriction notice. Following this visit, the restriction notice was lifted as no safeguarding concerns were identified.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/05/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last full inspection, in May 2023, one child has moved in. This child moved from another children's home operated by this provider. Leaders worked collaboratively with the child's placing authority to plan and prepare the child for this move. However, not all staff received the relevant information and training needed before the child moved in. This was immediately addressed by the leadership team and discussed with in staff supervisions.

Staff capture the child's voice well and have been creative in doing so, despite some communication difficulties. Staff have provided the child with a large chalk board and sketch paper so they can expressively communicate their wants, needs and desires. Recently, the child has been involved in choosing new flooring and furnishings for the lounge and their bedroom. This helps the child to feel a sense of belonging and permanency.

Staff like spending time with the child and are passionate about their roles in promoting opportunities, experiences and positive outcomes for the child. Staff have built strong and trusting relationships with the child, and this is helping the child gain confidence around staff. The child enjoys pamper evenings with staff and has recently visited a beauty salon. This approach is helping the child to feel good about themselves.

Staff understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and actively pursue and support routine health appointments for the child. Staff are sensitively supporting the child to become familiar with clinical environments and take time to talk to them about the benefits of self-care. These values are mirrored in the child's health plan and demonstrate a commitment from staff to help the child feel less worried in unfamiliar settings. Leaders are working with placing authorities to ensure the child receives their annual health assessment.

Staff have helped the child explore different foods and their textures. This has led to an improvement in the child's diet and positive associations with mealtimes. The child has started to request staff's hearty home-cooked meals and, on occasion, is eating these meals with staff. This is significant progress from their starting point.

Staff have set realistic goals and routines for the child. Visual timetables and adult-led structured activities help the child to manage their day. This is helping to bring important tasks into focus and fills the child's day with meaningful pursuits and accomplishments. This has led to an improvement in the child's educational attainment and sleep patterns.

Staff spend time listening to the child and their family about what matters most to them. Staff use a variety of ways to promote family time and engagement, such as family visits to the child's home which include the family dog. This approach helps to strengthen family bonds and creates lasting positive memories for the child.

Staff have supported the child to increase the amount of time they spend in tuition. This means the child is currently meeting their educational targets and expectations. The newly appointed head of education is working proactively with the virtual school and other education professionals to consider alternative educational arrangements, other than online tuition, to help widen the scope of learning and experiences for the child. The current environment for the child's online tuition is not suitable. Leaders recognise this and are in the process of exploring other viable options.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Since the child moved into the home, there has been a reduction in instances of staff needing to hold the child, to keep them and others safe. When incidents do arise, staff appropriately talk to the child about their feelings and seek to understand any underlying reasons. This is helping the child to unpick difficult and big emotions.

Staff understand strategies recorded in the child's positive behaviour support plan. This is overseen by the provider's clinical lead and is helping to repair and rebuild the child's relationships with some adults. This means the child is more accepting of nurture and gentle parenting by the staff who care for them.

Safer recruitment practices are good. References from potential new staff's previous employers are verified. The child is supported by suitably vetted staff.

Staff understand how to respond to the safety and welfare needs of the child. A high staffing presence and trusting relationships mean risks for the child have significantly reduced since they moved into the home. Staff can confidently locate equipment that keeps the child safe and resources are appropriately stored and stocked. However, there are no regular recorded checks by staff to show regular oversight of these stock levels.

Leaders have written risk assessments that clearly identify known and presenting risks for the child. Staff understand these risks well and can recognise the progress the child has made in managing their feelings and emotions. However, not all previous risks and one emerging risk are subject to a defined risk assessment. Although risks are currently low for the child, this is a missed opportunity for leaders to explore and discuss with staff how these risks may be managed as staff support naturally reduces.

Staff are clear on their safeguarding responsibilities and understand local safeguarding procedures. However, on one occasion, there was a delay in managers notifying the regulator and host authority of an allegation made by a child to an external professional. The management of this type of allegation is not clear in the provider's safeguarding policy. It is not clear who is responsible for referring and following up on children's concerns when situations like these arise.

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

Since the last full inspection, ownership of the organisation has changed and there has been a subsequent change in the leadership team. Two managers have submitted applications to register with Ofsted which were later withdrawn. A new manager has been recruited and was due to start working in the home on 14 October 2024. This manager has submitted their application to register with the regulator. In the interim, there is a newly recruited deputy manager and support managers continue to be present in the home.

Changes in the management team have led to inconsistencies in the day-to-day management and oversight of the home. Some shortfalls were noted in children's records and in managers meeting recommendations set by the provider's independent person. This is a missed opportunity for the provider to consistently improve and strengthen practice outside of regulated activities. Leaders are positive this will improve under the new manager.

Staff say they feel well supported and listened to by supporting managers. They receive good training and confidently apply this to practice. Supervisions are regular and help staff to reflect on their practice with children. Where needed, the regional manager is providing additional support to upskill and develop junior staff. However, staff who have been in their roles for more than a year have not received their annual appraisal. This is a missed opportunity to reflect with staff on their professional development and achievements.

The provider organisation has undergone many changes since the last full inspection. Leaders and managers have worked hard to meet the requirements and recommendations from past inspections and to recruit a new manager. However, the manager's monitoring of the quality of care being provided to the child has not been completed. This is a missed opportunity for managers to reflect on outcomes for children and to identify the continued development needs of the home.

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 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 and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff have all the relevant plans for a child before they move into the home. The registered person should ensure that all children's historic and emerging risks are suitably assessed. The registered person should ensure that all recommendations from the independent person are actioned in a timely way, with clear managerial oversight.	1 January 2025
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which— sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34 (1)(b)) In particular, when a child makes an allegation to an external professional such as a social worker or education professional.	1 January 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn, emphasising the value of independent study and reading for enjoyment. The home must provide a suitable environment, facilities, equipment and resources for learning. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)
- The registered person should ensure first-aid boxes are routinely maintained. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.13)

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: 2695213

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Liv Children Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 128 City Road, London EC1V 2NX

Responsible individual: Sharon Teasdale

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector

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