

2695213

Registered provider: Liv Children Care Limited

Assurance 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. The aim of the home is to support children who experience social and emotional difficulties due to their early childhood experiences.

Two children were living in the home at the time of this inspection. However, one child moved out of the home on the day of the inspection.

The home registered with Ofsted in October 2022. The post for a registered manager has been vacant since April 2023. An acting manager has been in post since August 2023.

Inspection date: 31 October 2023

Date of last inspection: 16 May 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.

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'.

Outcome 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.

Findings from the inspection

Children have experienced inconsistent care due to changes in the staff team in recent months. Children were not well supported to prepare for these changes, which led to them experiencing feelings of uncertainty and a lack of security. This has potentially contributed to children having difficulty adjusting to the staff changes and being reluctant to form relationships with several new members of staff. Both children expressed being unhappy living in the home due to the language barrier between them and some staff. Consequently, the children are cared for by a team of staff who they have not formed trusting, secure relationships with. Social care professionals and a parent are dissatisfied with the quality of care provided to children by staff.

Some positive interactions were observed between one child and staff members during the visit. The child freely approached staff and initiated conversation at times. This child said that they wish to remain living in the home specifically due to their positive relationship with a member of staff, who they feel is like a father to them. They enjoy playing football together and spending time talking about 'life'. The child's social worker and parent also expressed that the child has formed a strong bond with this member of staff.

Children's plans and risk assessments guide staff on actions to take to support children and to manage risks. However, staff had difficulty locating some children's records. Furthermore, some records were not accessible in the absence of the manager. Children's risk assessments are not updated immediately following incidents, and some reports are unclear and lacking in detail. For example, records of consequences for negative behaviour are unclear. Although staff have some knowledge of de-escalation techniques, incident reports do not clearly identify the actions taken by staff to support children.

Staff do not always keep parents and social care professionals informed and up to date about incidents involving children going missing from the home. Staff take prompt action to respond to incidents and talk to children about why they have gone missing. However, staff do not follow up with local authorities to ensure that return home interviews take place. This is a missed opportunity for the child to discuss any worries with an independent person.

Leaders and managers are actively working on upskilling the staff team. They have employed a quality assurance manager to support staff with recording and reporting. Furthermore, the responsible individual shared plans for the staff team to receive regular clinical input as from this month. It is anticipated that this will give

staff greater insight into the needs of the children who have experienced trauma and enhance the quality of care provided to them.

Staff have successfully supported both children to start college this academic year. One child attended a provision based on his interest in football. Although the children ceased to engage with education after several weeks, which was in part due to their complex needs, their return to education was progress for them both.

Staff attempt to speak to children about important matters and to explore their wishes and views following incidents. However, records of these conversations indicate missed opportunities to educate the children on potential risks linked to behaviours they have presented, such as going missing from the home. Additionally, staff are not always able to manage incidents effectively, particularly when children present behaviours that challenge, such as verbal and physical aggression towards staff. Senior staff provide support to newer staff in these instances. However, work to support children to reflect following these incidents and to take accountability is limited.

Review of the home's location risk assessment is overdue. Consequently, all current risks in the community may not have been identified and measures put in place to mitigate potential risks. The fire and health and safety assessments are also overdue for review. The fire risk assessment does not reflect current risks in the home. Fire extinguishers in the home are stored in a locked cupboard under the stairs. While staff have keys to the cupboard, this practice has not been risk assessed to identify and reduce potential risk. This is particularly concerning as this was raised at the last inspection.

Children are provided with a home environment that is generally well maintained. However, the carpet in some areas of the home is dirty. A child's ensuite bathroom is also not kept clean. The flooring between the entranceway and kitchen has lifted. These issues detract from a comfortable, homely feel.

Leaders and managers have made improvements to their recruitment processes. Since the last inspection, there is greater professional curiosity when carrying out recruitment checks, and new interview questions have been introduced.

There has been a change of leadership and management since the last inspection. The responsible individual is aware of the current shortfalls and has begun to implement new strategies, which are yet to be tested. This involves the current acting manager receiving greater input on a regular basis from the responsible individual, a clinical lead and quality assurance manager. The manager also participates in reflective group discussions with other home managers, where they share examples of good practice.

Action has been taken to address requirements from the last inspection. However, one is repeated and new ones have been set. The identified shortfalls in several areas indicate that the current monitoring systems in place are not effective and that greater management oversight is needed in the home. However, leaders and

managers have plans in place to make improvements; some of which have been recently implemented.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/05/2023	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, 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 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; 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)(d)) In particular, ensure that fire safety arrangements are reviewed and children's risk assessments are regularly updated.	29 November 2023
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	29 December 2023

(Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(a)(h)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; strive to gain each child’s respect and trust; understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same;	29 December 2023

de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)(b))	
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). (Regulation 46 (1))	29 December 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff follow up with the responsible local authority regarding independent return home interviews being carried out for children following their return to the home, after being missing from care or away from the home without permission. Information provided by such interviews should be considered when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- 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. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have the skills and confidence to communicate easily and understand the importance of listening to, involving and responding to the children they care for. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.10)
- The registered person should ensure that there are systems in place to improve the reliability of communication between staff, placing authorities and children's families. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets children's needs. To maintain a homely environment, regular maintenance and repair works should be carried out when needed. The home should comply with relevant health and safety legislation, as well as the home's related practices. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2695213

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Liv Children Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Sharon Teasdale

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sasha Reid, Social Care Inspector

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