

SC031479

Registered provider: London Borough of Southwark

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for children with learning and/or physical disabilities and/or experience social and emotional difficulties. This includes one child on a longer-term arrangement and short breaks for up to four children. The provider voluntarily suspended its short-breaks provision on 24 September 2022. At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2021. He is working towards achieving the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare.

The home shares the premises with a short-breaks service for adults. The registered manager and staff work across both provisions. The Care Quality Commission regulates and inspects the adult service.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 January 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: Ofsted issued two compliance notices on 7 October 2022. These notices relate to regulation 6 (the quality and purpose of care standard) and regulation 12 (the protection of children standard). Ofsted

carried out a monitoring visit on 1 November 2022 and found that the two compliance notices were met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/09/2022	Full	Inadequate
14/07/2021	Full	Good
09/03/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
10/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff have a good understanding of children's needs and provide them with high-quality care. Staff help children to have positive experiences and make progress in their lives.

The home is a calm, clean, safe, comfortable and nurturing environment for children. Staff enable children to make choices and assert their individuality. Over time, children become more confident and able to communicate their views and feelings more constructively.

Staff promote children's health well. They carefully monitor children's health and make sure that children receive any specialist support that they need. Robust medication procedures ensure that children receive their medication as prescribed.

Staff actively support children's learning. They work closely with children's teachers to enable children to benefit from diverse types of education, including online education. Staff engage children positively outside the formal school time to help them to continue to learn and develop their skills.

Children have good opportunities to access different activities at home and in the community. Examples include playing a keyboard at home and going to a disco in the local community. Activities help children to develop their interests, creativity and social skills.

Children receive sensitive support to help them move on from the home when this is the plan for them. Staff use social stories to help children prepare for the move and help children to settle in their new environment.

Parents talk highly about the quality of care that their children receive. One mother said that she is impressed with how staff have helped her child.

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

Safeguarding children is leaders', managers' and staff's priority at this home. Safeguarding and child protection matters are regularly discussed at staff handovers, team meetings and individual supervision meetings. Staff receive bespoke safeguarding training, which is delivered by the local authority's social workers. Staff know who the safeguarding leads are in the home and are familiar with the reporting procedures.

The home has good links with the designated safeguarding lead, who deals with allegations against staff. There have been no allegations made against any staff and no concerns have been raised about staff practice since the last inspection.

The home's robust risk assessment processes ensure that staff are aware of the risks to individual children and know how to keep children safe. Staff follow children's safety plans and take appropriate actions to promote children's welfare. Staff carry out daily checks of all areas of the home to ensure that it is a safe environment. Additionally, regular health and safety checks help staff to keep the home a safe place for children.

The home's positive approach to behaviour management is effective in promoting children's safer behaviours. A psychologist has helped staff to develop their understanding of children's behaviours and improve their behaviour management practices. Staff also reflect on and learn from past incidents. There has only been one significant safeguarding incident since the last inspection, which staff managed very well.

Staff keep children who are at risk of going missing from home safe. They manage this risk in line with the children's risk assessments and safety plans. Incidents of children going missing from home have reduced considerably since the last inspection.

The local authority has thorough procedures for recruiting staff. The management makes sure that the agency staff undergo a stringent vetting process before they start working at the home. Safer staff recruitment contributes to safeguarding children.

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

Leaders and managers have achieved many improvements in the home. Staff help children to become safer, to have positive experiences and to progress. However, despite the increased management monitoring, there are still some gaps in the leaderships and management of the home.

The home's statement of purpose does not reflect the conditions of registration or the actual service that is being provided. The home does not maintain the register of children. These are further regulatory breaches in relation to the same regulations that were raised at the last inspection, albeit for different reasons.

It is concerning that the home does not have a children's guide. However, staff have minimised the negative impact of this shortfall by using social stories to explain the home to the child. An advocate has been commissioned to strengthen the voice of the child.

One child's file does not demonstrate their participation in the planning of their care. This is disappointing as most records are written in a child-friendly way and are translated to reflect the different ways that the children communicate, for example through the use of pictures.

The home's staff roster demonstrates sufficient staffing levels. However, the use of agency staff is high, particularly during the night. Despite the ongoing recruitment drive, recruiting permanent staff continues to be a challenge.

The use of the same agency staff on a regular basis minimises the risk of inconsistent care. However, the home's good arrangements for staff supervision do not extend to the agency staff. The agency staff only receive supervision from their agency.

Not all permanent members of staff have obtained the relevant qualification within the required time frame. All staff who are not suitably qualified are enrolled on the relevant course.

Staff work closely with the children's social workers and the children's disability team. The professionals from education and health talk positively about the home but comment that staff are sometimes slow to share information. Delays in information-sharing undermine the quality of partnership working.

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that each child have access to the home's children's guide, and the home's complaints procedure, when the child's placement in the home is agreed and throughout the child's stay in the home. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(b)(ii))	15 February 2023
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 16 (3)(a))	1 February 2023
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	1 April 2023

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))	
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)) This relates to maintaining the children's register as required under Schedule 4.1.	1 February 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that there is swift communication between the home and other professionals, in particular education and health. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.7)
- The registered person should ensure that no more than half of the staff on duty at any one time are from an external agency. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.17)
- The registered person should ensure that the arrangements for staff supervision are extended to the agency staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: SC031479

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Southwark Council, 2nd Floor, 160 Tooley Street,
London SE1 2QH

Responsible individual: Kerry Rabey

Registered manager: Peter Lee

Inspector

Seka Graovac, Social Care Inspector

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