

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 is a local authority service. It provides short-break stays for up to five children who have complex learning and/or physical disabilities and/or challenging behaviours. Children usually stay from Monday to Friday or at weekends. The short-break service shares the premises with a similar service for adults. There is one registered manager for both services. Staff work across both provisions. The Care Quality Commission regulates and inspects the adult service.

The home's statement of purpose states that staff aim to improve the independence and life chances for children by taking a multi-agency approach to ensure that they can reach their full potential and achieve positive life outcomes.

The home does not have a registered manager.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 June 2019

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: 31 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/10/2018	Full	Good
19/02/2018	Full	Good
12/09/2017	Interim	Not judged
22/02/2017	Interim	Not judged

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 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; - help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; - help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; - 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	30/09/2019

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; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's individual case records contain up-to-date behaviour support plans that specifically refer to the support needs of the young person at times of crisis.	
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ('the statement of purpose') which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16(1)) In particular, make clear that children from the local authority may also be accommodated in the centre on an emergency basis.	30/09/2019
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16(5)) In particular, this relates to ensuring that adults using the short-break service do not access the children's unit.	30/09/2019
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. Case records must be kept— if the child dies before attaining the age of 18, for 15 years from the date of the child's death; in cases not falling within sub-paragraph (a), for 75 years from the child's date of birth; securely in the children's home during the period when the child	30/09/2019

to whom the case records relate is accommodated there; and in a secure place after the child has ceased to be accommodated in the home. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, the statutory provision (if any) under which the child is provided with accommodation.	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(4)(a)(b)(5))	30/09/2019

Recommendations

- The children's home's staff should seek to identify and provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop themselves as part of the home's plan for their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph, 6.4)

In particular, the registered person must ensure that any written records of goals and targets set for children include details of the child's achievements and progress, and provide evidence that such goals and targets are continually revised.

- Children who have disabilities can be disadvantaged and socially isolated from

friends, especially if they attend a school which is not in their local community such as a residential special school. The registered person in a short-break setting should ensure that the short-break service offers the chance for children to develop friendships, by carefully matching groups and, where possible, by arranging for children to frequently stay with the same group. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 40, paragraph, 8.20)

In particular, the registered person must ensure that overnight stays for children are planned and given some priority over the competing need for emergency placements.

- The registered person is responsible for leading a team which promotes high quality care for all children living in the home. They must lead and manage the home in a way that delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home's Statement of Purpose. They should also play a key role in shaping the ethos of the home through the care resources and opportunities offered to children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)

In particular, to consider appropriate ways to develop and raise the morale of the staff team.

- A child's plans should form the basis of their care, and providers should use their judgement as to what is relevant in each case. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 11.1)

In particular, in order to improve practice, the registered person should ensure that the home's individual support plans clearly evidence how staff are providing support in order to help children to make progress in relation to their identified needs.

- Ensure that the registered person undertakes a review that focuses on the quality of care provided by the home. In particular, ascertaining the views of parents whose children receive a short break service on the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)

Inspection judgements

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

No children were using the service at the time of the inspection. Parents who have used the service are generally happy with the care provided. One parent said, 'This is the only home I trust with my daughter. I know that, despite her many challenges, the staff care for her well.'

There is a lack of planning for children's short breaks. Overnight stays are not always arranged in advance. Parents said that they were unaware of their overnight allocations

and that breaks were often offered at short notice. This does not enable children to form friendships and have enjoyable stays in the home.

Some children have developed positive relationships with the staff team. However, managers often have to juggle the needs of children with the local authority's need for emergency accommodation across both services. Staff work across both services. This can result in children's short breaks being cancelled and for some children having to return home during their short break.

Staff indicated that they were put under pressure by managers to take emergency admissions. They said that this did not given them the opportunity to assess the risks associated for each person's health needs and well-being. Because of this, staff felt they often had to prioritise certain tasks more than others. As a result, potential risks to children are increased when staff are not fully equipped to support them.

Staff are very experienced in caring for children who have complex health needs. However, the written care and health plans do not consistently match the quality of care provided by staff. For example, behaviour support plans are not detailed and do not identify all the behaviours which staff must manage.

The home's care plans do not always specify the help and support that children need to help them to make progress.

Evening routines and activities for children are often last-minute decisions, dependent on the children in the home and the pressures on staff across the two services. Activities are often limited to those in the home or short walks in the community.

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

This is a safe service. Staff understand the safeguarding procedures to follow to keep children safe from harm. Parents spoken to said that their children are safe during their stay at the home.

Staff's risk management practices are not robust. Staff are aware of children's vulnerabilities that pose risks to their welfare. However, the strategies to be used by staff to manage the risks lack clarity and are not fit for purpose.

Physical interventions and sanctions are rarely used in the home.

The premises are spacious and furnished beautifully. There are two sensory rooms with an extensive range of interactive equipment for children to use. The specialist equipment and adaptations do not detract from the homely environment.

Health and safety checks ensure that the physical environment is safe for children and staff. Any risks arising from the shared facilities have been eliminated by a clear separation of the two services.

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

The service currently has an interim manager in place and he has submitted an

application to register with Ofsted. The interim manager is suitably experienced and has a level 5 qualification.

Since the last inspection, there have been a number of significant changes in the service. The two deputy managers are all on long-term sick leave. The service is currently going through a consultation process to restructure the staff team. There is more reliance on the use of agency staff.

Because of these changes, staff morale in the home is low. Staff spoken with during the inspection described the impact of the recent staff turnover as causing 'feelings of uncertainty... feelings of insecurity', and 'a lack of trust in managers'. These feelings persist despite them being addressed at staff team meetings.

Staff do not receive regular supervision. This limits leaders' and managers' overview of the staff team's welfare, staff's skills and any areas for professional development.

Staff cohesion remains strong. Their commitment to maintaining good-quality care to children does not waiver. Staff work under pressure to meet the needs of children. However, the level of emergency admissions across both disciplines and the lack of systems in place to manage these are not effective or well managed.

The lack of staff at management level means that monitoring of management systems and procedures is not in place in the home. This has had some impact on the quality of care and support provided to children. The responsible individual and the interim manager recognise these shortfalls, and there are plans in place to address these.

Several regulatory requirements arising from the last inspection have not been completed. These include monthly independent visitor reports, quality of care reports and revisions to the statement of purpose.

The staff team said that the interim manager is not visible and active in the home, for example joining shifts, creating staff work plans and planning for young people's short breaks. This is a lost opportunity to gain knowledge of the staff team's anxieties and to inform the interim manager's plans for improvements to the service.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: Fiona Wasdell

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Juanita Mayers, social care inspector

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