

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 short breaks for up to five children who have learning and/or physical disabilities. The home is also caring for two children on a longer-term arrangement.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2021 and he is suitably qualified.

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

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 September 2022

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children is poor.

Date of last inspection: 14 July 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/07/2021	Full	Good
09/03/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
10/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
31/10/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children living at the home and those receiving short-break care are exposed to poor living conditions. Boarded-up and partially boarded-up bedroom windows limit children's access to fresh air and daylight. This inadequate living environment poses a risk to the children's emotional health and well-being. The provider has not taken any proactive measures to improve the children's living environment. The inspector was told that the replacement windows required specialist glass. However, the registered manager was unable to confirm when replacement windows were ordered, or the expected delivery or installation dates.

Other outstanding maintenance issues undermine a homely and welcoming living environment. These include a damaged lounge door and a broken bathroom radiator.

The short-break care arrangements are having a negative impact on one child's experiences of living at the home. For example, staff report that a child on longer term care arrangements becomes upset when children go home after their short breaks. The registered manager acknowledged this and said, 'Seeing other children come and go was not in [child's name] best interests.'

Staff develop strategies to minimise the emotional impact of children using the short break service on children living at the home. For example, staff avoid using the word, 'going home', which upsets a child who lives at the home. Additionally, to reduce distress to this child, staff keep them separate from their school peers who attend for short breaks. This limits the child's interactions with all children who stay at the home.

Children's community activities include walks to the local park, visits to cafes and trips to local city landmarks. However, these opportunities are often limited due to insufficient staff to supervise these activities safely. During their time at the home, children take part in activities such as sand and water play, music making, computer time or relaxing in the sensory room.

Staff talk to parents and carers to ensure that they have up-to-date information about the children so that they can plan for their short breaks. Children are supported to develop life skills, such as learning to make a sandwich, preparing their laundry and attending to their own personal care.

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

Leaders and managers fail to ensure that the home's safeguarding procedures are followed. For example, when staff observed bruises on a child, they failed to

escalate their concerns swiftly to the home's safeguarding lead and other relevant professionals. Leaders and managers subsequently failed to prioritise this safeguarding concern, which led to a further delay in getting the concerns investigated.

Poor communication between staff in relation to potential hazards at the home has placed children at risk of harm. For example, some staff were not made aware that a bedroom window restrictor had been removed. A child was subsequently placed in this bedroom and accessed the roof via the unrestricted window. While on the roof, the child sustained an injury to their foot from broken glass from a previous incident.

Staff do not consistently implement the required supervision levels for children, as identified in the children's risk assessments. For example, a child who is supposed to be on one-to-one staff supervision and support was left alone in the home's lounge. They smashed the lounge window and went missing from the home.

Staff do not always follow the strategies identified to reduce risk and increase children's safety. For example, they did not support two children to carry out separate activities to prevent them from causing any harm to each other.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager is also the manager for the local authority's adult short-break home, which is located on the same site as the children's home. His management oversight is split between the two homes.

Staff morale is low. Staff are concerned about the lack of leadership and management visibility at the home. They do not feel that they receive sufficient support or that they are listened to.

Staff work across the children's home and the adult short-break service. The home relies on a large percentage of agency staff to supplement the understaffed permanent staff team. The manager explained that there is an active ongoing recruitment campaign to reduce staff vacancies.

Staff shortages and a high dependency on agency staff to cover shifts are undermining the quality and continuity of care provided to children. A member of staff described the staff rota as a 'visual mess'. The manager was unable to demonstrate that there are sufficient qualified staff on each shift to meet the children's needs.

The home's statement of purpose is not kept updated to reflect all changes at the home, such as staff changes.

Practice leads are being developed in specialisms such as positive behaviour support and autism spectrum disorder. However, the manager's monitoring of staff's training is not adequate because it does not include agency staff's qualifications or their training.

The manager has set out a future strategic plan for the home and the staff team. This takes account of annual surveys and feedback from children, parents and professionals. A social worker said, 'Staff work well with the professional network, and staff have positive relationships with the children.'

Following this inspection, two compliance notices were issued under regulation 6, the quality and purpose of care standard, and under regulation 12, the help and protection standard. Ofsted will undertake a monitoring visit to assess the progress made in meeting the compliance notices.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(vii)(c)(i)(ii))	30 October 2022
*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;	30 October 2022

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)(v)(vi)(vii)(b))	
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— 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; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;	

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that all staff who work in the home have suitable experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. Leaders and managers must be able to access and review all records at the home that relate to the children and the day-to-day running of the home.	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, the review of the quality of care report must include feedback from parents, stakeholders and staff.	30 October 2022
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	30 October 2022
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;	30 October 2022

ensure that the records are kept up to date.
(Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b))

In particular, leaders and managers must keep a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home, and a record of the actual rosters worked.

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: London Borough of Southwark

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

Responsible individual: Kerry Rabey

Registered manager: Peter Lee

Inspector

Victoria Jones, Social Care Inspector

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