

1271222

GS Social Care Solutions Ltd

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who may have a learning and/or physical disability. The home is operated by a private organisation. The manager has been registered since August 2020.

Inspection date: 3 February 2021

This monitoring visit

The purpose of the on-site visit was to look at the quality of care provided to children, following an anonymous complaint received by Ofsted in relation to poor staff practice towards children and insufficient levels of staff training. There has also been a complaint from a parent in relation to the care of their child, which has been investigated and is still ongoing.

The inspector has looked at all the concerns raised in the anonymous complaint, by speaking with children, staff and social workers. There is no evidence to substantiate the concerns. With respect to the ongoing complaint, the management team has considered lessons learned as a result of the investigation and has implemented a learning outcomes plan to improve areas of practice.

Children have been kept occupied during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, with creative indoor and outdoor activities to meet children's needs. The staff team works consistently within government guidance to ensure the safety of everyone in the home. The management team has ensured the well-being of the staff team during the pandemic. Staff have been given extra supervisions, offered support from the learning disability nurse or counselling service and because of this they feel extremely supported by the manager.

Staff have positive and nurturing relationships with children. Staff say that they genuinely love working with the children. The inspector observed caring and relaxed interactions between the children and staff. Staff understand the individual needs

and risk behaviour for children. Staff are extremely vigilant on shift and ensure that children are always supervised due to their level of need.

Children feel safe and happy living at the home. Children told the inspector that they trust staff. Staff communication skills with children are creative and have helped children to develop individual ways of communicating with staff to share their feelings. Children understand how to make a complaint and who to raise this with. Children are actively involved in planning their days, such as choosing their own menus and daily activities.

Social workers say that children are safe and make significant progress while living at the home. Some examples of the positive progress are children flourishing in education, children helped to manage their risks, increased confidence in communicating with others and improved diets. One social worker said: 'The staff team are amazing. Everything they do is personalised to the child. They are the child's biggest advocate. They are like a family.'

Behaviour management plans and risk assessments are robust and give staff clear guidance on effective strategies to use to support children to manage their behaviour. The plans are individualised to the child. They focus on the strengths of the child and triggers to their behaviour, and relate directly to the behaviour management model that staff are trained in.

Staff demonstrate that they understand de-escalation techniques to help children to manage their behaviour. Restraint records are clear and evaluate the effectiveness of the measure used. Key-work sessions are completed with children following the use of restraint. That said, not all records evidence a debrief with staff involved in the restraint. This prevents staff from having the opportunity to discuss the measure used and reflect on lessons learned to improve practice.

There has been one serious incident where a staff member has mismanaged a child's behaviour and supporting staff did not use the whistle-blowing procedure appropriately. The manager has taken suitable action to investigate the incident, address the shortfalls in staff practice and report it to the appropriate safeguarding professionals. Subsequently, a team meeting has taken place to reinforce the staff team's understanding of the whistle-blowing policy and a bespoke training course in safeguarding disabled children has been arranged. During discussion with the inspector, staff could evidence their knowledge of the whistle-blowing policy and of how to escalate any safeguarding concerns.

Staff have received all necessary training to meet children's needs and complexities. However, all staff have not been provided with whistle-blowing training. The training is a necessity to ensure that staff know how to take immediate action should they have any concerns about a staff member or professional's practice who works with children living in the home.

Independent visitor reports do not meet regulatory requirements, as they do not always summarise whether the independent visitor feels that children are safeguarded effectively, and their welfare promoted. In addition, the reports do not include regular feedback from children, staff, parents or stakeholders to be able to obtain a full evaluation of the service provided in the home.

The manager has ensured that the core staff team has remained together to ensure continuity of care for the children. Staff and social workers say that the manager has brought stability to the staff team and the high turnover of staff has reduced. Three consistent agency staff are used regularly. Staff told the inspector that these specific agency staff understand the children's needs, have positive relationships with the children and are part of the team.

The manager has used the time during the pandemic positively to get to know the children and the staff team, including reviewing the operation of the home and areas that needed improving.

Requirements made at Ofsted's previous inspection were not looked at during this visit and so remain requirements and recommendations for the home's next visit.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/06/2019	Full	Good
19/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/05/2018	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, 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— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)) Specifically, to ensure that all staff have been trained in and understand the whistle-blowing policy and procedure. The manager must ensure that staff know how to take appropriate, safe and immediate action should they have concerns about childcare practice in relation to staff or professionals working in the home.	18 March 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience.	9 April 2020

(Regulation 33 (4)(a))	
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (“the authorised person”)— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)) Specifically, that debriefs take place with all staff involved in a restraint or physical intervention. This is to enable staff and the management team to discuss the measure used and any lessons learned from the incident to improve practice.	18 March 2021
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. 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. (Regulation 44 (2)(a) (4)(a)(b))	18 March 2021
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;	9 April 2020

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.

After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").

The registered person must—

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (5))

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1271222

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: GS Social Care Solutions Ltd

Responsible individual: Faye Mellor

Registered manager: Rowena Hawcroft

Inspector

Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector

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