

1271222

Registered provider: GS Social Care Solutions Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to two young people who may have a learning disability, physical disability, sensory impairment and/or autistic spectrum disorder and who may also display associated challenging behaviour.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 May 2018

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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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 staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare. (Regulation 7(1)(c)(2)(a)(i))	22/06/2018
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. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i))	22/06/2018
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.	22/06/2018

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(h))	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(b)(2)(a))	22/06/2018
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(1)(a)(b)(3)(a)(vii)(c))	22/06/2018

Recommendations

- Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person must specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission and how staff should support the child on return to the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the above principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The registered person should agree with their local police force, procedures and guidance on police involvement with the home to reduce unnecessary police involvement in managing behaviour and criminalisation of behaviours. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.40)
- As set out in regulations 31—33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. Everyone working at the home must understand their roles and responsibilities and what they are authorised to decide on their own initiative. There should be clear lines of accountability. Each home must have clear arrangements in place to maintain effective management when the manager is absent, off duty or on leave. Shift leaders should be appointed and their role reflected on the staff rota. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

Inspection judgements

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

One young person was admitted to the home in March 2018 and has been the only resident during this time. A decision has been made to end this young person's placement, as it has been identified that her needs cannot be met effectively. At the time of the inspection, a new placement had been identified for the young person and plans were being made to support her transition.

The young person has developed some positive relationships with staff and appears to enjoy spending time with them. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the young person's needs and were observed supporting her in a positive manner.

The young person attended school prior to moving to the home. Since her admission, she has been provided with a home tutor and a reduced provision. Her engagement in education has been variable. Her tutor reported that she is beginning to engage more, but that this remains inconsistent.

Prior to her admission, the young person benefited from art therapy and life-story work. Plans were in place to continue this aspect of support at the home. However, she has not settled well enough for this work to commence. This does not support the young person's emotional well-being.

It was noted that the registered manager has been proactive in attempting to arrange appropriate mental health support for the young person. However, some aspects of the young person's health needs are not addressed in her care plan. For example, it was confirmed in records that she experienced joint pain and required a dental extraction, but her health care plan did not address these matters, and did not contain any information about how these needs were to be met. This means that the young person is at risk of not receiving the healthcare she requires.

It was evident when speaking with staff and viewing daily records, that there are very clear routines in place for the young person. Records of incidents demonstrate that some of these routines are inflexible and that attempts to implement the routines have led to incidents of heightened behaviour from the young person. There was no evidence in the young person's care plan to demonstrate that she had been consulted about her daily routines and preferences, or why such inflexible routines were required. This means that the young person's opportunities to make day-to-day choices are limited and that her views, wishes and feelings have not been fully considered when planning her care.

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

All staff and managers receive safeguarding training at the start of their employment. This training is regularly updated, which helps to ensure that they maintain knowledge of

safeguarding practice.

Staff demonstrate awareness of the risks to the young person's safety and well-being. A range of risk assessments identify some specific concerns. However, some lack detail and context, and strategies for minimising risk are not always clearly explained. It was also noted that some issues relating to the young person's behaviour, such as fire setting and swallowing unsafe items, had not been included in her risk assessments.

A protocol is in place, which contains guidance for staff about the action they must take if the young person goes missing from the home. Some of the information in this protocol is unclear. There are examples of conflicting guidance, which means staff may not be aware of how to respond effectively if the young person goes missing.

The young person has an individual behaviour support plan, which describes known behaviours and behaviour management strategies. However, the plan does not include some aspects of behaviours presented by the young person during her stay at the home. The strategies lack clarity in some areas, for example when staff should consider requesting assistance from the police.

There has been a number of serious incidents throughout the young person's stay at the home. Records of these incidents are clear and contain a good level of detail. However, the process of analysing the incidents requires some improvement. A number of potential learning points were identified when viewing the records, which had not been previously identified or discussed with staff. This means opportunities to improve practice and respond more effectively during future incidents have been lost.

Sanctions are used to assist the young person in understanding the impact of negative behaviour. The records demonstrate that the effectiveness of sanctions is not always explored, and that the young person's views are not consistently recorded. Ineffective monitoring of sanctions does not support a consistent approach.

The young person is provided with well-maintained accommodation. The registered manager responds promptly to any safety matters, which helps to ensure that the home and equipment remains safe and fit for purpose. There are processes in place to ensure that all new staff are carefully recruited. Recruitment is generally satisfactory. However, in a small number of examples, evidence relating to the verification of references and employment history checks could be clearer.

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

The home's manager has been registered since January 2018, and is suitably qualified and experienced.

The registered manager has access to adequate resources and manages these in accordance with young people's needs. For example, arrangements were recently made to increase staffing levels in response to the emerging complex needs of the young person who currently lives at the home.

It has been acknowledged that the home is not an appropriate setting for the current young person. This demonstrates that the process of pre-admission assessment of the young person was not effective. It is the view of the provider that sufficient information was not provided by the young person's placing authority, prior to her admission. However, referral information viewed during the inspection did describe the young person's complex needs, and should have prompted a more in-depth assessment. As the young person will now move on to another service, this has resulted in additional disruption and a delay in her progress, in areas such as education.

There are systems in place to monitor quality and safety of the service. However, some shortfalls were identified in relation to the use of these systems. For example, discrepancies were noted in medication audits but these had not been previously identified. Records of physical intervention demonstrated that these incidents were not always sufficiently analysed in a manner that identified future learning points.

Staff confirmed that they benefit from regular supervision and the opportunity to discuss areas such as personal development and training. However, records of supervision were not consistently signed by staff. It was also noted that one newly appointed staff member had not had a formal supervision with the registered manager, despite having been involved in a number of potentially stressful situations.

A team meeting has not taken place since the admission of the young person. This would have been a useful opportunity for managers and staff to reflect on incidents together and discuss the effectiveness of strategies, and for the registered manager to monitor staff morale. If staff do not feel sufficiently supported, this has potential to impact on their practice and, as such, the standard of care and support they provide.

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: 1271222

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: GS Social Care Solutions Ltd

Registered provider address: 1a Barnmeadow Lane, Great Harwood, Lancashire BB6 7AB

Responsible individual: Faye Mellor

Registered manager: Karen Dobson

Inspector

Marie Cordingley, social care inspector

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