

2594218

Registered provider: Gordon Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home cares for up to four children with learning disabilities and/or social and emotional difficulties.

This home registered with Ofsted in September 2020. The registered manager post has been vacant since August 2022. The registered manager post has recently been offered to an individual, and they are going through the recruitment process. The responsible individual facilitated this inspection.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home. Both of the children were spoken to during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 11 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/10/2022	Full	Inadequate
28/07/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Children living at the home are happy, and they are making progress. The feedback about the home is variable. Children's parents express their satisfaction with the quality of care provided to children. Social workers highlight that some aspects of the children's care require further improvement. This relates to the education and health arrangements.

Not all children benefit from good education outcomes. One child has been out of education for several months. Although staff provide this child with opportunities to learn informally, these activities are not linked to the child's education targets. Staff are not maximising this child's learning to help with their transition back into school.

Staff do not ensure that all children have a nutritious, portion-controlled diet and engage in regular exercise. A social worker and a parent highlighted their concerns in relation to a child's weight gain. Staff are not helping this child to achieve good health outcomes.

All children are developing their independent living skills. Children are taking more responsibility for their personal care. They assist with making their beds, completing their laundry and tidying up after eating their meals. Children also assist with cooking meals and baking. These skills will help children in their adult lives.

Children are growing in confidence and patience, and it is encouraging to see their personal development. Children are more communicative, and they are able to express their choices and feelings. This enables children to have greater control over their daily lives. Children have better social skills, which enable them to interact appropriately with others. An example of this is when they sit together to eat their meals.

Children continue to enjoy a range of activities and new experiences. Children explore their community by travelling on buses, visiting parks, going shopping and eating out in local restaurants. Children also visit Central London attractions, which enables them to pursue their interests. One example is a visit to an interactive fairy-tale adventure.

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

A significant safeguarding allegation has been substantiated. Leaders and managers are working hard to ensure that the home is a safe place for children. Staff have undergone a wide range of training, and policies and procedures have been updated. New ways of working have also been introduced.

The safer care policy does not provide staff with clear guidance on how to safely care for children. This policy gives conflicting advice regarding showing affection to children, and it is open to misinterpretation. During discussions with staff and the examination of records, it was apparent that staff knew the principles of safe care. They understand their safeguarding role and how to whistle-blow concerns. This helps to ensure that children are cared for in a safe manner.

Some recommendations from the fire risk assessment are outstanding. This work is scheduled to be completed in January 2023. This is two months after the advised date. There are no immediate risks to children. However, leaders and managers should ensure that the home complies with all health and safety recommendations.

Safer recruitment practices help to ensure unsuitable people do not work with children. When necessary, leaders and managers make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service when serious concerns arise about staff. They also dismiss staff who do not demonstrate the appropriate skills and attitude needed to work with children.

Leaders and managers learn from safeguarding issues. They demonstrate a commitment to promoting a strong safeguarding culture and have made the necessary improvements to increase children's safety.

Children benefit from staff who know how to support their emotional needs. Leaders and managers have commissioned a behavioural support therapist to help them to provide more personalised support to children. Children are more settled, and there is a reduction in incidents in the home. Children independently go to their rooms when they feel agitated. Children also use the jacuzzi and sensory room to relax.

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

The leadership and management of the home is showing areas of improvement. The manager post has been offered to an individual who has the required experience, qualifications and skills. Their employment is subject to the necessary checks. The home is being managed by an interim manager, supported by an experienced quality assurance manager and the responsible individual.

The quality of care review does not include children's views. Leaders and managers are missing opportunities to capture the children's positive views and experiences, which are clearly detailed in their progress reports. The independent monitoring reports are constructive and focus on improvements. However, the most recent report was not sent to Ofsted in a timely way.

Partnership working with local authorities is variable. A local authority highlighted issues regarding communication, expectations and information-sharing. Leaders and managers confirm that there have been areas of disagreement with a local authority. Another local authority has undertaken their own performance monitoring visits and

confirmed their satisfaction with the home. Good partnership working is necessary to ensure everyone is working together to promote children's best interests.

Children benefit from a more organised, enthusiastic and better-trained staff team. A social worker and staff members have praised the structure provided by the interim manager. Their influence has resulted in improved shift planning, detailed handovers and more meaningful record-keeping. A computerised recording system is being introduced to ensure that all relevant information about children is easily accessible.

Children receive care from a staff team whose skills and knowledge are being continually enhanced. All staff are enrolled in an appropriate vocational course for children's residential care. Staff benefit from ongoing training and workshops. They also now have a dedicated training room, which provides them with a quiet place to learn and study.

Leaders and managers have actioned the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. Staff receive the training, support and supervision that they need to care for and safeguard children. Staff have received training on safeguarding disabled children and safer caring. Further bespoke expert training is also scheduled for December 2022. New staff benefit from an extended induction, and staff supervision provides a space for staff to reflect on children's experiences.

Leaders and managers have oversight of children's progress and experiences. They maintain an efficient children's register. It is encouraging to see that the majority of children have returned back to their family home or moved on to foster care or semi-independent accommodation. Staff are proud of children's achievements, and leaders and managers have a realistic development plan to further improve the quality of care provided at the home. This plan needs to be embedded to ensure children benefit from improved outcomes.

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 the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(e)) In particular, ensure that the safer caring policy and guidance clearly detail what is appropriate and inappropriate touch.	5 December 2022
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire. (Regulations 25 (1) (a)) In particular, ensure that the recommendations from the fire risk assessment are actioned.	31 December 2022
The health and well-being standard is that— children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 10 (1)(c) (2)(a)(iv)) In particular, ensure that children's weight is managed and exercise is part of their weekly routine.	31 December 2022

The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child’s education training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i))	31 December 2022
The system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children. (Regulation 45 (5))	31 December 2022
The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person’s report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (7)(a))	5 December 2022
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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, ensure that there is consistent partnership working with local authorities.	5 December 2022

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: 2594218

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Gordon Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: 7 St Albans Grove, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 1ND

Responsible individual: Sylvia Gordon

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sharon Payne, Social Care Inspector

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