

# 2614999

Registered provider: GAC Family Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home was registered in February 2021. The home provides care for up to three children with emotional and behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities.

The home is led by a registered manager.

### Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 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 widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected and their welfare is not promoted, and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

**Date of last inspection:** 25 March 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 25/03/2022      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness         |
| 04/08/2021      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate**

At the time of this inspection, there were three children living at this home. Two of the children have had no care plans completed by the manager or staff. Staff are not aware of how they should be caring for the children. The staff have a limited knowledge of what they are trying to achieve and how to promote the welfare and safety of the children.

Education provision is very limited for two children. Although managers are working with the virtual school to improve this, there is no evidence that managers are ensuring staff engage children with educational activities. As a result, children's days are largely unstructured, and they are not being provided with learning opportunities to help them make progress in this crucial area.

There is a lack of consistency in how the staff work with children. One child said, 'Staff are not consistent.' One member of staff said there is 'a lack of consistency and no rules and/or consequences'. Relationships between staff are not consistently strong. This means the experiences of children are being impacted upon given the inconsistency in staff's care practice, communication and ability to work together.

The physical environment does not provide children with a homely or comfortable feel. There are no photos of children or children's artwork on display. Toys, games and resources are limited. The garden is not well kept. This impacts on the overall experiences of the children because it does not help them to feel it is their home. However, children do like the home. One child said, 'It's a good home, staff are caring.' Another child, who had moved to the home recently, said, 'I think it will be better than my last place. You can ask for help.'

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

Risks to children have not been assessed. There are no risk assessments for two of the children. This is despite managers being aware of significant risky behaviour for the children before their admission. Staff have not been informed of known or potential risks. They have limited knowledge of children, to reduce risk and keep children safe.

There have been very few incidents recorded. However, actions identified following an incident have not always been completed. Discussions between staff and children following incidents have often not taken place or been delayed for weeks after the event. As a result, children and staff cannot learn from incidents.

The recording of incidents in relevant documents is not yet of a good enough standard. Recording lacks clarity over what happened and exact timings. Further detail and clarity would help managers to understand what led up to the incident

and how it was managed. The current poor recording hinders managers in learning valuable lessons from incidents to prevent reoccurrence.

Safeguarding policies have not been reviewed, so it is unclear if they provide correct and relevant information to guide staff in keeping children safe. Additionally, staff are signing policies that are incorrect. Staff are not following guidance, including policies on physical intervention and alcohol and substance misuse.

Managers have not ensured that staff have accurate information for key external professionals who have a crucial role in safeguarding children. This means the reporting of safeguarding incidents could be delayed or incorrect processes followed.

Children have been at risk when missing from the home. Records do not set out what action was taken by staff to prevent a child leaving the home or if staff actively looked for them. When children have returned home after being missing, the return home interview procedure has been inconsistent. For example, one child did have return interviews, but records indicate this has not been the same for all children. Therefore, children are not helped to understand the risks of them going missing and staff will be unclear where children have been and who with.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

The manager's quality assurance processes are poor. The manager has very recently introduced new monitoring processes that should improve this area. However, there was no monitoring process in place for the previous six months. As a result, it is difficult for the manager to identify the areas requiring improvement and make the changes required.

When new children come to live at the home, this is not managed well. Leaders and managers have not ensured that plans and assessments for two children were in place on admission or immediately afterwards. This means that staff do not have the information required to care for the children effectively and safely.

Managers have failed to ensure that actions following incidents have been carried out. Key-work sessions and debriefs with children and staff have not taken place. As a result, children and staff are not helped with their feelings following an incident or helped to understand what actions could be taken in the future to prevent further incidents.

Staff supervision is poor. There are no written records of the manager's supervision with staff. This is not in accordance with the organisation's policy on staff supervision. Consequently, staff are not having the opportunity to reflect on their care practice. Staff are not able to raise any concerns they may have with the home or care practice.

The records of staff recruitment are incomplete. The manager is not recording crucial information, especially at the time of appointment. This does not meet the

requirements for safer recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.

## 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       |
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| <p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning.<br/>(Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(b))</p> <p>This particularly refers to the home having plans regarding children's education, and structuring days for children not in school so they continue to learn.</p> | 31 August 2022 |
| <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 31 August 2022 |

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| <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>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. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(v)(x))</p> <p>This particularly refers to having plans that identify children’s needs and how staff can help children, ensuring staff are consistent in addressing children’s behaviour, and that managers provide the supervision to help staff to do this.</p> |                     |
| <p>*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>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)(b))</p> <p>This particularly refers to there being risk assessments and care plans in place that identify known and potential risks for each child, and that staff are skilled and confident in challenging and dealing with inappropriate and risky behaviour.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>29 July 2022</p> |
| <p>*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>29 July 2022</p> |

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| <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p> <p>This particularly refers to the registered manager monitoring all aspects of the service.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that each child's relevant plans are followed.<br/>(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))</p> <p>This particularly refers to ensuring that all the children have a plan that staff can work to, to ensure children are helped and protected, and their welfare is promoted at all times.</p> | 31 August 2022 |
| <p>The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.<br/>(Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))</p> <p>This particularly refers to any revised statement of purpose being submitted to HMCI within 28 days and containing the correct information, such as current staffing.</p>                                                                                                                                                       | 31 August 2022 |
| <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 31 August 2022 |



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| <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                       |
| <p>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.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>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").</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.<br/>(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))</p> | <p>31 August 2022</p> |

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| <p>This particularly refers to ensuring there is a suitable monitoring system in place and that reports are completed at least every six months and sent to HMCI within 28 days.</p> |  |
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\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that in some instances, a child may express wishes that are not always in their best interests or which may conflict with the views of other children in the home. In such circumstances, the responsible adults will have to balance the wishes of the child against what they judge to be in the best interests of the child and reach a reasonable view about the best way forward in the interests of all. The reasons for reaching any decision will need to be carefully explained to and understood by the child or children concerned. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 22, paragraph 4.9)
- The registered person must ensure that all children must have access to appropriate advocacy support, and where possible this should be provided by a person that the child chooses. Looked-after children are entitled to an independent advocate to advise them and ensure they have the support needed to express their views wishes and feelings about their care and lives. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 23, paragraph 4.16)
- The registered person must ensure that the ethos of the home should support each child to learn, emphasising the value of independent study and reading for enjoyment. The home must make available suitable facilities, equipment and resources for learning and ensure that the home's routines do not form barriers to children wishing to use the home resources to study. Staff must support children with home study by encouraging them to learn independent study skills and helping them to practise those skills. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 29, paragraph 5.18)
- The registered person must ensure that expectations of standards of behaviour should be high for all staff and children in the home. These standards should be clear and unambiguous. Children should be supported to develop understanding and empathy towards each other. Positive behaviour and relationships should be reinforced, praised and encouraged; poor behaviour should be challenged and discussed. The development of safe, stable and secure relationships with staff in the home should be central to the ethos of the home and support the development of secure attachments that, where appropriate, persist over time. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 39, paragraph 8.11)
- The registered person must ensure that the behaviour management strategy should be understood and applied at all times by staff and must be kept under

review and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 46, paragraph 9.34)

## **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:** 2614999

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** GAC Family Services Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Unit 29a, The Link, 49 Effra Road, London SW2 1BZ

**Responsible individual:** Mark Easie

**Registered manager:** Nicola Johnston

## Inspector

Shaun Caplis, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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