

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 is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care for up to three children who have social and emotional difficulties or learning disabilities.

The home is led by a registered manager.

Three children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 September 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/09/2023	Full	Good
20/09/2022	Full	Good
14/06/2022	Full	Inadequate
25/03/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is bright, well-furnished and feels like a family home. Refurbishments are being made throughout the property, including a new bathroom. Children's bedrooms are being redecorated and children personalise their bedrooms to reflect their tastes, interests and hobbies.

Children are encouraged and supported to engage in a range of activities. Staff support children to do this individually or as a group. One child spoke positively about when they all go out together and the fun they have. Another child has recently joined the local football team. This has reignited an interest the child has in football. The children have been on holidays with the staff. They have had special trips organised to visit places of specific interest to them. This helps children to have positive experiences and to build bonds with staff.

The staff retain a strong focus on children's education. Children have been supported to achieve above and beyond expectations. For example, one child has been out of education for a considerable amount of time. Staff ensured that the right education support was in place, and they passed all the GCSE exams they sat. The child is now undertaking A-levels. The child's social worker said: 'She [the child] has made incredible progress.'

Staff provide good support for children's physical and mental health. Children are encouraged to be active by the staff. They are provided with healthy, home cooked food. Children are encouraged to contribute to the menu choices in weekly house meetings. Children who are struggling with their mental health are supported to access specialist services as they require. Children trust the staff to help them and to be there for them. The staff support the children to build positive relationships. There are focused discussions between staff and children on important topics for the children. The children are supported to share their wishes and feelings.

The children's identity and diversity are valued by the manager and staff. Children are supported to celebrate who they are, and this helps children build a positive view of themselves.

One child has left the home since the last inspection. The manager and staff missed an opportunity to offer support to that child when they were struggling in their new home, following the move.

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

The manager and the staff understand the children's risks and vulnerabilities. Staff understand children's past experiences and the impact this may have on children's behaviour. This helps the staff to take effective action, when required, to keep children

safe. Children have individual risk assessments and safety plans, and these are designed to help staff support the children. However, these plans do not always contain all the information required. Staff knowledge is not always embedded in documents. This could impact the staff and how they support incidents in the home.

Multi-agency working for children is strong. The multi-agency team around the child work closely and collaboratively with the staff at the home. This, together with specialist services has helped to reduce risk taking behaviours for children and keep them safe. Children have adults that they trust, both staff at the home and external professionals. This means they share information about the children's lives and their needs, especially in relation to safeguarding. Children confide in adults and seek support to manage their emotions.

Children know how to make a complaint. Complaints are thoroughly investigated by the manager. However, children are not always updated of the outcome of their complaints. This could impact children's confidence to speak up about something that is worrying them.

There is a planned and active response, from staff, to when children go missing from care. Incidents of this nature are low and have reduced over time. Staff gather information that helps to build a picture of the reasons behind children going missing. They learn from previous incidents of children going missing, to prevent reoccurrence. However, the information does not always transfer to children's safety plans.

Children are safe living in the home. One child's substance misuse has now stopped with the support of staff and external professionals, and this child is considerably safer.

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

The home is managed by a dedicated and committed manager. The manager is supported by an experienced responsible individual. The manager knows the children well. The manager understands the children's needs and the impact on the children's behaviour of their past experiences.

The home has been through a challenging period since the last inspection. There have been significant changes to the staff team. This includes those in leadership roles. Several staff members have left. There has been significant use of agency staff members to cover the shortfalls. This has had an impact on children's well-being at times, due to a lack of consistency.

The manager has guided the home through the period of change, and staff are now more settled. However, there have been several shortfalls in the managers monitoring and oversight. One incident of physical restraint was not properly reviewed. It was not shared with external professionals so that proper scrutiny over the actions of staff could be reviewed. This has had a negative impact on any learning that may have been taken from the incident and applied to future practice.

Overall, the recruitment of new staff is good. However, on one occasion, the manager and responsible individual did not assess information about a new member of staff. They did not fully satisfy themselves of the staff members suitability before they could start. This has not had a detrimental impact on the children.

The manager has not completed oversight and monitoring in relation to several areas. A new deputy manager has been appointed and it is expected that this will be a positive addition that will help to address these shortfalls because it will provide additional management support for the manager.

Staff speak highly of the manager. Staff describe the culture in the home as positive, and their development is promoted. This helps to improve the morale of staff and their knowledge and skills. The manager leads by example in how they expect children to be cared for. External professionals stated that the manager is a good advocate for the children. They have faith in the manager to provide consistently good care for the children.

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 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— ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) This specifically relates to the review of incidents and information being transparent and, if required, independent from the home. It also relates to ensuring that a specific incident of restraint is investigated by the provider. It also relates to care plan documents being reviewed to accurately reflect incidents and new concerns.	30 December 2024

It also relates to ensuring that the use of agency staff is kept to a minimum to ensure consistency of care for children.	
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— 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; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(i)(e)) This specifically relates to children's risk assessments, safety and behaviour support plans having all the information required to support staff in keeping children safe.	30 December 2024
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or 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). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. The registered person may permit an individual to start work at the home despite the fact that the requirement in paragraph (3)(d) has not been met if— the registered person ensures that the individual is appropriately supervised while carrying out the individual's duties, pending	19 October 2024

receipt of any outstanding information on the matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2, which is then considered satisfactory by the registered person.

(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(d) (7)(d))

This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that discussions take place where the honesty of an applicant has been called into question, and that the manager is satisfied with the outcome.

Recommendations

- Regulation 40(4) requires the registered person to notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of the child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious (40(4)(e)). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

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: 49 Effra Road, London SW2 1BZ

Responsible individual: Mark Easie

Registered manager: Amira Brown

Inspector

Chris Haines, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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