

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 privately owned. It is registered to provide care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties or learning disabilities.

The registered manager's position has been vacant since July 2022. The home is being led by an interim manager.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 14 June 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: At the full inspection on 14 and 15 June 2022, Ofsted found serious weaknesses in safeguarding practice and in leadership and management. As a result, Ofsted issued compliance notices in relation to the protection of children and the leadership and management of the home.

A monitoring visit was carried out on 2 August 2022. Several actions have been taken to improve safeguarding practice and management oversight. Consequently, the compliance notices were found to be met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/06/2022	Full	Inadequate
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: good

There have been significant and rapid developments since the last inspection and the monitoring visit. The physical environment has improved considerably, having been redecorated. The home now presents as a more personalised for the children. This includes photos of the children in the home and their bedrooms. The children's artwork is on display and there have been positive changes to the garden area and conservatory. This now includes an education area. This provides the children with a warmer and more homely feel to where they live.

Children regularly see their families and those close to them. The manager and staff ensure that regular communication with families takes place and that they are kept informed of their child's progress. The interim manager has developed a 'parent's guide' to the home and a newsletter.

The children have good educational provision, and they are attending either school or college. This provides the children with a structure to their day and routines. This includes days in school and home education. The children have made very good progress with their education and are invested in continuing their education. This is very good progress and will help the children to achieve their goals and ambitions.

The staff undertake individual key-work sessions with the children. Staff and children discuss a wide range of topics, and these are always relevant to the children. These sessions take place flexibly and are creative. For example, conversations take place in the car. This enables the children to speak freely and helps the children to feel listened to and valued.

The children have been supported, by the manager and staff, to contribute to their own records. Records about the children are written in the first person and directly include the children in the recording. Children's wishes and feelings are fully considered at every step. The children's individual care plans are written with the views of the children fully considered. This means that the children are central to all aspects of the care they receive. The children can provide their views on their care and they feel heard and listened to.

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

The children's risks and vulnerabilities are recorded in the children's behaviour support plans. Managers and staff undertake regular reviews of these documents. These important documents are detailed and help staff understand how best to deal with each child's specific behaviours and risks. As a result, incidents have decreased, and physical interventions have become rare.

Managers and staff have developed a positive relationship with the local police community support officers. The officers have spoken to the children to provide

them with reassurance. Additionally, the police have supported staff over some concerns regarding the children misusing substances.

Children rarely go missing from care. However, this is included in the risk assessments for each child. Staff are aware of the procedures should a child go missing. This ensures that children are protected from the risks known to children, who are missing from care.

Safeguarding training is part of the mandatory training for all staff. In addition, the manager has organised extra training. This includes sessions focusing on internet safety, safeguarding, whistleblowing, children going missing from care and child sexual exploitation. This training increases the staff's awareness of ways to help and protect children from harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A new manager was appointed following the last full inspection. The new manager quickly introduced significant changes. The requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection have been fully met. This has included positive changes to the physical environment. Management oversight has improved, and all children have detailed plans and assessments.

Staff speak highly of the manager and the changes that have been introduced. One staff member said: 'The home is really organised now, so much better than before. The manager is good and clear about what she wants, it's all about the kids.' The children's social workers also speak highly of the manager and the changes she has introduced. Staff morale has improved, and a culture of positivity has been established to working with the children.

The manager's oversight has significantly improved. The new manager has established systems to provide her with the information she needs regarding the strengths and areas for improvement in the home. Incident reports, children's meetings and key-working sessions have comments added by the manager. The manager has a comprehensive weekly checklist that she completes. In addition, the responsible individual completes a thorough monthly audit. This ensures that managers are aware of everything that is happening in the home.

Supervisions between the manager and staff are taking place more often. However, this is still not consistent. The manager is aware of this being an area for improvement. As a result, staff are not always having the opportunity to reflect on their practice with a manager.

The manager receives good support from senior management. She is reflective and wants to learn from others. Regular supervisions with the responsible individual have helped with the manager's own development and provided the manager with the support she requires. The manager has introduced many changes and developments in this home. This has improved the experiences and protection of 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 registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c)) This particularly refers to the professional supervision of staff taking place regularly.	31 October 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that all children 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 should ensure that, in line with their individual health plans and the ethos of the home, children are offered advice, support and guidance on health and well-being. Staff should have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children understand and, where necessary, work to change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being such as, but not limited to, nutrition and healthy diet, exercise, mental health, sexual relationships, sexual health, contraception and use of legal highs, drugs, alcohol and tobacco. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 35, paragraph 7.18)

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: Post vacant

Inspectors

Shaun Caplis, Social Care Inspector
Kathryn Hurley, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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