

2614999

Registered provider: GAC Family Services Ltd

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care and accommodation for up to three children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities.

The manager is registered with Ofsted and has been in post since the home was registered in February 2021.

Inspection date: 25 March 2022

Date of last inspection: 4 August 2021

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection.

At this interim inspection, Ofsted judged that it has sustained effectiveness.

Two children live in the home. One of these children was living in the home at the last inspection. The manager and staff have provided much-needed stability to the child. Gradual progress has been made; the child has developed good independence skills and relationships with the staff. The child's social worker said: 'They have shown great commitment. It is a positive home. They advocate so well for her and are doing everything they can for her.'

One child has recently moved into the home. This was extremely well planned and included several overnight visits that enabled the child to get used to the environment, the other child and the staff. The child said: 'I like it here and I feel listened to. I get to choose the activities and the meals I want to eat. I am vegetarian and they accommodate that well. The staff show me how much they really care about me.'

Records kept of the children moving in and out of the home are incorrect. Failure to provide accurate records demonstrates that further improvement is required in management oversight. This has mainly occurred because the manager is often working directly with the children to cover any gaps in the rota. The provider is taking action to address this and is in the process of recruiting more staff.

Staff are ambitious for the children and celebrate their achievements. A child who was previously reluctant to engage in education is now attending daily. The headteacher said: 'The manager and staff support [the child] well. The level of communication from the home is very good.'

One of the children has a significant history of going missing. These incidents are reducing. Staff are proactive in searching for the child and follow missing procedures to ensure the child's safe return. However, on one occasion, another child went missing during a lapse in monitoring. The records for this incident contain inaccuracies in the timeline of the event. The manager is in the process of reviewing these records and intends to put actions in place to prevent a recurrence.

Staff are nurturing in manner. They speak with the children to help them recognise the dangers associated with going missing. Independent return home interviews are offered. However, on one occasion, this procedure was not followed.

The staff team is stable. Staff feel well supported by the manager. Staff supervision is of good quality. However, several staff have not received supervision as often as

required. This includes one member of staff who is in their probationary period. This means that the staff are missing opportunities to reflect on their practice.

Children are supported to maintain relationships with the people who are important to them. The manager and staff have developed good relationships with parents. Both children's parents regularly visit the home. A parent said: 'She is safe there. They support her to do so many different things. The home is very welcoming. I pop in quite often and I always feel welcome.'

Activities are encouraged and the children enjoy trips to the cinema, having their nails manicured, going to the gym and shopping. Such activities increase children's social skills and confidence.

Staff are skilled at de-escalating incidents. When physical intervention is required for safety reasons, the incidents have been recorded promptly. However, the views of the child were not gained on one occasion and staff are not consistently receiving debriefs. This may prevent strategies being implemented to reduce the likelihood of similar incidents occurring.

The manager has met four of the requirements from the last inspection and the two recommendations. Three requirements have been restated.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/08/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) This specifically relates to staff ensuring that children are safeguarded effectively; that staff work in accordance with the home's safeguarding policies; and that the day-to-day care promotes children's safety and welfare.	27 May 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; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(f)) This specifically refers to the manager maintaining oversight of the home, ensuring that staff practice promotes children's welfare and that members of the staff team work together. The manager should understand children's progress and any blocks to this progress and take effective action to put things right.	27 May 2022
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction; and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(b))	27 May 2022
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—	27 May 2022

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; 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 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

Information about this inspection

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full 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

Lynne Drage, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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