

SC415400

Registered provider: Gloucestershire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by the local authority. It provides short-break care for a maximum of six children aged up to 18 years with learning and/or physical disabilities.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since November 2020.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 October 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 17 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/11/2021	Full	Good
10/04/2019	Full	Good
04/06/2018	Full	Good
03/10/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Since the last inspection, there has been a decline in the quality of care provided to children at this short-break home. Managers and staff have not taken effective action in response to safeguarding concerns, and have failed to show professional curiosity in the care of children.

Children's daily incident reports and safeguarding records are poorly recorded and unorganised and consequently difficult to read. Staff complete duplicate records across a range of forms which do not provide accurate information about concerns in relation to children or record actions for follow up. 'Complaints are poorly recorded and not always followed up as quickly as they should be. For example, complaint records often lack accurate dates or details and one complaint made by a child in May has not yet been resolved.'

Children's care plans provide a helpful pen picture of the child, their needs as well as their likes and dislikes. This helps the children to build warm and trusting relationships with staff. However, behaviour management plans do not contain specific details about children's self-harming behaviours to help staff understand patterns and trends. The plans lack detailed strategies about how to reduce some repetitive and physically harmful behaviours to support children in distress.

Since the last inspection, improvements have been made to the home. Children's bedrooms have been repainted, new toys have been bought and new en suite showers fitted. This short-break home is clean and comfortable. Children enjoy the facilities and are encouraged to try new foods, as well as to enjoy some of their favourite ones.

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

Managers and staff at this home have failed to identify, analyse and refer children at potential risk of harm to children's social care services. Staff routinely record numerous injuries and bruises to children through a 'bump and bruises book'. Staff also record body maps, but have failed to spot signs of possible abuse to children including physical harm and neglect.

Safeguarding records are muddled, with contradictory information recorded. Children's chronologies miss key information and events for children. Staff do not routinely record when children arrive at the home showing signs of neglect. Staff and managers do not report concerns swiftly enough to ensure that children's social care services are aware of possible harm to children.

Staff and managers lack confidence in their ability to formulate a clear view about potential harm to children, to share with safeguarding professionals or senior staff when they have noted changes in children's behaviour or to consider that children are potentially being abused.

It is positive that, since the last inspection,, there has been no use of physical restraint as the ethos of the home is not to restrain children. Nonetheless, the behaviour management policy lacks detail about the use of discipline and restraint, as well as the training staff receive about challenging behaviour. This does not help staff to understand how best to support children when in crisis or at risk of harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leaders and managers have failed to highlight poor staff practice in relation to record-keeping and sharing safeguarding concerns with parents and professionals to prioritise children's welfare. The registered manager was not aware of the severity of the issues until this inspection, nor was the independent person who visits this home.

Staff enjoy working at this home and speak positively about the support they receive from managers. However, supervision notes are weak, they do not evidence reflective conversations, or focus on the individual needs of children to help develop staff practice. Some supervision notes are unclear. They do not include actions to ensure children make progress and to monitor staff practice.

Although team meetings take place frequently and are recorded, which is positive, the recording of these meetings is not reliable. Actions are not routinely reviewed to check that they have been completed or followed up when they do not happen to ensure children make improvements with their behaviour, health and well-being.

Staff receive and are up to date with the required mandatory training. Despite this, staff lack sufficient skills to respond when there are concerns for children. Some staff have completed safeguarding disabled children training, but have not recognised that children in this home are potentially at risk of significant harm.,

The manager has completed a review of the quality of care provided at this home. However, the review lacks evaluation about the strengths and areas of development within the service. Children's views about the care they receive, and the quality of the environment, are not included.

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
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(i))	6 December 2022
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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; 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;	6 December 2022

that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e))	
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; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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; 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 use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(e)(f)(g)(i)(h))	6 December 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))	6 December 2022

The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2))	6 December 2022
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) The registered manager should ensure that all records are clearly organised, completed to a professional standard and include the action taken in response to safeguarding concerns.	6 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: SC415400

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester GL1 2TG

Responsible individual: Sue Hall

Registered manager: Helen Morgan

Inspectors

Anna Gravelle, His Majesty's Inspector
Gary Turney, Social Care Inspector

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