

SC035500

Registered provider: South Gloucestershire Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this secure children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict children's liberty. The home can accommodate up to 24 children aged between 10 and 18 years. There were 12 children living at the home at the time of this inspection.

All places available at the home are commissioned on a contractual basis by the Youth Custody Service (YCS). The YCS may, under certain circumstances, permit local authority children's services to spot-purchase a vacant bed at the home, to enable a local authority to place a child on welfare grounds under section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Admission of any young person under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

The commissioning of health services at this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

There has been no registered manager since May 2022. The manager in day-to-day charge of the home has an application in progress to be registered with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 10 January 2023

Date of last inspection: 2 August 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

The quality of care provided to children continues to improve. Children told inspectors that the home is calm and they feel safe.

Children are treated with dignity and respect. They were observed to be comfortable and relaxed with each other and with staff. As a result, children are living in a positive environment, which supports them to make good progress.

Children benefit from well-planned care, and they have a say in the way they are looked after. The overall approach supports children to have a positive experience of learning how to develop the skills they need to improve their life chances. In one example, the severity and frequency of a child's self-harming behaviour have reduced significantly because they have been involved in finding other ways of coping and expressing their feelings.

Children know how to make a complaint if they are unhappy about any aspect of their care. Complaints are taken seriously, investigated and acted on. Children receive feedback about their complaint in a timely way. They are offered the opportunity to escalate their concerns to external agencies if they are unhappy about the outcome of their complaint.

The safety of children

Children's priority needs and risks are regularly reviewed by the multi-disciplinary team. The approach to risk management has been adjusted. Managers ensure that children's individual needs are carefully considered when decisions are made about their ability to safely access activities.

The use of single separation, where children are locked in an area when they meet the legal criteria of being a significant risk to themselves or others, has reduced significantly. There have been just two uses of single separation since the last inspection. They were both appropriate and were applied for the minimum amount of time possible.

Staff make appropriate use of sanctions to help children learn from behavioural incidents. Staff ensure that sanctions consequences are relevant to the incident. Children are encouraged to participate in deciding what the outcome of their actions should be. This restorative approach ensures that the use of sanctions is fair and is more likely to be effective.

Managers carefully review all incidents of physical restraint to ensure that the use of the measure was appropriate and proportionate. Closed-circuit television footage of restraints reviewed by inspectors during the inspection shows that staff are applying due diligence when they are restraining children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Managers continue to invest time and energy into changing the culture to ensure that children consistently receive genuine, nurturing care.

Records of staff supervision demonstrate that managers use supervision effectively to ensure that staff know how to safely care for children in line with their care plans and risk assessments. Managers also discuss staff performance with them during supervision and address any shortfalls in the quality of care they are providing to children.

Managers have failed to ensure that the independent person is consistently submitting their monthly reports to the regulator. A requirement about the independent person arrangements was made at the last inspection and is restated.

Not all records of physical restraint demonstrate the actions managers have taken when their review of incidents has revealed that the use of physical restraint could potentially have been avoided. One recent incident of physical restraint occurred when a child was trying to access an unsafe area. A similar incident occurred a few weeks previously. Records do not demonstrate that managers have shared the learning from the first incident with staff with the intention of reducing the risk of a reoccurrence. In another example, managers have spoken to a staff member about the ways he could have tried to de-escalate an incident to avoid restraint. However, this discussion is not recorded on the restraint record.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
20/04/2022	Full	Inadequate
08/06/2021	Full	Good
20/04/2021	Full	Inadequate

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
<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>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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p> <p>This is with specific reference to ensuring that records of physical intervention demonstrate the actions managers have taken when their review of incidents has revealed that the use of physical restraint could potentially have been avoided.</p>	<p>28 February 2023</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children’s home at least once each month.</p> <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and</p> <p>to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home’s records (except for a child’s case records, unless the child and the child’s placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.</p> <p>A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced.</p>	<p>28 February 2023</p>

The independent person must produce a report about a visit (“the independent person’s report”) which sets out, in particular, the independent person’s opinion as to whether—

children are effectively safeguarded; and

the conduct of the home promotes children’s well-being.

The independent person’s report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions.

The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person’s report to—

HMCI;

upon request, the local authority for the area in which the home is located;

the placing authorities of children;

the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager; and

the responsible individual (if one is nominated).

(Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5)

(7)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. In particular, managers should embed and secure the new monitoring and tracking tools into the work of the school so that the increased shared understanding that this provides informs the planning of the curriculum for each child. Also, the careers programme should be formalised so that it can be tailored to the needs of individual children based on their aspirations and plans. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 29, paragraph 5.18)

Secure children's home details

Unique reference number: SC035500

Provision sub-type: Secure unit

Registered provider: South Gloucestershire Council

Registered provider address: South Gloucestershire Children, Adults and Health,
PO Box 1955, Bristol BS37 0DE

Responsible individual: Jo Cross

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Helen Simmons, Social Care Inspector
Paul Taylor, Social Care Inspector

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