

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 19 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 child under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who is 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.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since January 2023.

Inspection date: 16 November 2023

Date of last inspection: 18 April 2023

Judgement at last inspection: 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'.

Outcome 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.

Children say that this is a good place to live. They spoke about having positive relationships with staff who give them the support they need. Most children spoken to identified staff as being the best thing about the home.

Staff know the children well. Care, education and health staff work in a coordinated way and deliver individualised programmes of support. These are kept under constant review and are effective in supporting children to make steady progress overall.

Children are provided with good opportunities to express their views about the home and contribute to their plans. They know how to use the complaints system and have weekly access to an external advocate. The advocate was visiting the children on the day of the inspection. She confirmed children are listened to and concerns are responded to appropriately by leaders and managers.

Leaders and managers have introduced new processes to monitor the use of physical restraint. These include improved working practices between the home and the external children's partnership, and a focus on the reporting and review of incidents. This additional level of external scrutiny helps to ensure that the use of physical restraint is necessary and proportionate to children's behaviours and risks.

Since the last inspection, there have been some occasions when staff practice regarding physical restraint has been inappropriate, placing children at risk of harm. These incidents have been identified by managers and external professionals. In these circumstances, managers acted quickly to protect children, referring these incidents to the relevant safeguarding authorities for investigation and providing children with additional support.

During incidents of restraint, there have been some occasions when staff have taken steps to remove items from a child's bedroom as a standard action, rather than as a response to the child's individual risks. When this is not required to manage or reduce risks, this action is distressing for children.

In general, incidents of single separation, where children are locked into an area alone due to being a serious risk to themselves or others, and managing away, where children are kept apart from their peers due to risk, are used in line with the legal criteria for such action, and for the minimum time necessary. However, staff shortages during the summer period resulted in children spending more time confined to their bedrooms as an emergency measure and at short notice. Although, in these circumstances, children were provided with additional activities in their

bedrooms, they were frustrated by this experience. Managers continue to recruit to staff vacancies across the home to prevent a recurrence of this situation.

There have been several occasions when children have been found to be in possession of contraband such as smoking materials and vapes. On these occasions, managers have completed investigations that have enabled them to identify how these items got into the home and reduce their reoccurrence. External agencies have been involved where necessary. However, the manager has failed to inform Ofsted about some of these incidents.

Suitable action has been taken to address three of the six recommendations from the previous inspection. This has led to improvements in the complaints process, external scrutiny of restraint practice and information-sharing between managers and healthcare professionals.

Some improvements in the recording of physical restraints and other incidents are noted. Nevertheless, the language that staff use to describe children's behaviour is often unhelpful and does not provide children with a meaningful account of their experiences. This is particularly true of the incident debrief records that staff complete with children.

Two recommendations relating to medication and education will be reviewed at the next full inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/04/2023	Full	Good
02/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
20/04/2022	Full	Inadequate
08/06/2021	Full	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, The 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 registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))</p>	<p>14 December 2023</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. In particular, the registered person should ensure that all teachers plan and teach their curriculums effectively, so that children gain substantial new knowledge and skills, and ensure that children have the opportunity to work towards meaningful accredited qualifications throughout the vocational training curriculum. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 29, paragraph 5.18)
- The registered person should ensure that medicines are administered in line with a medically approved protocol. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Specifically, only items that pose a risk to the child should be removed from their bedrooms following incidents of physical restraint. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Secure children's home details

Unique reference number: SC035500

Provision sub-type: Secure Unit

Registered provider: South Gloucestershire Council

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

Responsible individual: Catherine Boyce

Registered manager: David Ballard

Inspectors

Paul Scott, Regulatory Inspection Manager
Jo Stephenson, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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