

1262935

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home that provides care for up to six children. The home provides a settled period of residential care, with a therapeutic emphasis and multi-agency involvement. The aim is to help children recover from experiences which have rendered them vulnerable and disrupted their primary relationships.

The home has been registered since August 2017. A new manager registered with Ofsted in August 2021.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 15 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 September 2021

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: 22 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/10/2018	Full	Outstanding
26/02/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress at this home. Before children arrive, comprehensive information gathering and thorough planning help staff to quickly develop effective rapports with children. This provides the foundation for children to build trusting and meaningful relationships with staff and engage in the support the home can offer.

Most children enjoy very positive relationships with staff. They feel included in how they are cared for and supported. Children say that they are regularly consulted and have a voice in this home and that staff treat them with dignity and respect. This makes them feel valued, and for many, significantly improves their confidence and self-esteem.

Children's physical, emotional and mental health needs are of high priority to staff. Children have good access to a range of healthcare services to take care of their general healthcare needs. Children also benefit from the home's internal therapeutic team which provides direct therapeutic support to children and guidance to staff to support the care they provide.

As children generally come to the home at a crisis point their lives, their safety and well-being are of immediate concern. Due to this, and often the short-term nature of their time at the home, most do not attend formal education. However, they are successful in completing accredited vocational awards associated with the activities they do. Those that live at the home for a longer period do attend the local schools and college to meet their learning needs and ambitions.

Children have many positive experiences at this home with excellent opportunities to enjoy adventurous outdoor pursuits such as rock climbing and canoeing, as well as individual hobbies and craftwork. Many of these are designed to help them learn how to manage risks, learn new skills, and have fun. Although some outdoor activities were suspended, due to government restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, children were encouraged to walk and enjoy a range of alternative activities at the home.

Government restrictions on travel, during the COVID-19 pandemic, meant that some children missed planned visits to see family and friends. However, good use was made of available technology, and children were able to keep in touch using video and telephone calls.

Professionals speak positively about the support provided and good progress children make. One social worker wrote:

'I think this is the first time he has ever felt safe, secure and loved, and that is down to [name of staff] and the team. It is a rarity for a staff group from an outside agency to work closely with the local authority to secure a young

person's future. I trust their judgement and guidance where [name of child] is concerned and feel very confident that they all have his best interest at heart and want the very best for him in the future.'

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

Children say they feel safe and know that staff are committed to keeping them safe. They speak positively about the relationships they share with staff and understand that staff are concerned for their safety and well-being. One child commented, 'The best thing is that staff genuinely care about us.'

Children are known to be at high risk of harm before coming to this home. Concerns for children include involvement in gang-related crime and child sexual and criminal exploitation. Managers work closely with police and other agencies to ensure that their risks are well understood and managed in a co-ordinated and well-informed manner. Due to the established multi-agency working practices, these risks significantly decline over time.

The home provides children with a safe, quiet, and comfortable environment. This gives them the space they need to reflect on their involvement in previous activities and consider their safety and well-being. A minority of children still have occasions when they go missing in the local area. These incidents are for a much shorter duration than they were before the children came to the home and are declining in number. Staff manage these incidents well and work effectively with the police to ensure children's safety.

Children's positive behaviour is praised and rewarded. Incentives are individually identified by children and provide them with the motivation needed to work towards their goals. The use of restraint practice is low and only used when necessary. Children do receive sanctions, when their behaviour falls below what is expected, but these also are few. However, several sanction records, which were reviewed during inspection, failed to routinely comment on the effectiveness of the sanction, leaving the record incomplete.

Medication arrangements have been reviewed, and all staff in the home have been retrained in response an error highlighted during Ofsted's last visit. Safer recruitment practice is robust and aims to ensure children are only cared for by suitable adults. Together these measures strengthen the home's ability to keep children safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has gained a new registered manager since Ofsted's last visit. The registered manager is currently progressing through her level 5 qualification and works closely with the home's assistant manager to support children and staff. The responsible individual and head of care also have regular presence within the home, ensuring that there is strength in the leadership and management of the home.

The registered manager and assistant manager are good advocates for children. They demonstrate confidence in their communications with other professionals and are not afraid to challenge to seek better outcomes for children.

There has been a considerable turnover of staff, during the early part of this year, but action was taken to address this. Of key concern was a change in the home's staff rota system. While this change worked well for some, it did not suit all. The home has since reverted to the original rota arrangements and been successful in recruiting new staff. While staff acknowledge this did cause some dip in morale at the time, they feel that their views were fairly heard and valued.

Staff say that they are well supported in their roles. They identify a good induction programme, regular professional supervision, and a high quality of training as important in achieving this. Although face-to-face training has stalled at times, due to government restrictions, staff feel that the availability of information and online training has been extremely valuable.

A particular strength noted by staff is the company's investment to ensure that new staff are fully supported to complete their Level 3 qualification. Staff benefit from individual sessions that are financially supported and tailored to the specific work context.

Internal and external monitoring is good and has been used effectively to inform development planning. For instance, additional management support has been added to each of the home's outreach properties. This provides improved communication and greater continuity across the service. Staff unanimously agreed this has been a successful development.

Requirements made at the last inspection have all been suitably met.

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— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; 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)(a)(vii)(c)) This specifically relates to children's sanction records.	30 October 2021

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: 1262935

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Ltd

Registered provider address: Stoneybeck, Bowscar, Penrith CA11 8RP

Responsible individual: Simon Barton

Registered manager: Victoria Lydon

Inspector

Gillian Walters, Social Care Inspector

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