

1262935

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is run by a private organisation. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 February 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
---	--------------------

How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
---	-------------

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
---	-------------

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Young people make significant progress, particularly in developing independent living skills and in managing their attachments and emotions. This helps them become more resilient, and they are supported to address their personal challenges and previous often-chaotic lifestyles.
- Young people receive and benefit from individualised care and support from staff who know them very well. Staff are caring and sensitive to the young people's needs, and they develop excellent relationships together.
- Young people are extremely well supported to engage in education, therapy and contact with their families. The multi-professional decision-making approach is effective, and is disseminated to other homes within the organisation and local authority.
- Staff meet the young people's health needs to an exceptionally high standard. Staff fully understand and encourage the young people's diversity needs.
- Models of care, research into practice and theory are embedded into care practices. This approach contributes to the support the staff provide to the young people, which enables the young people to understand the implications of their behaviour and to make the necessary changes that will support them into adulthood.
- Young people have the opportunity to experience and take part in a vast number of outdoor education, social and leisure activities.
- Internal care planning processes are thorough and agreed. Regular consultation processes ensure that the young people's views, wishes, thoughts and feelings are heard and acted on.
- Excellent partnership working with child protection agencies ensures that relevant information, particularly in relation to child sexual exploitation, is shared in a timely manner. This keeps the young people safe and protected.
- A motivated, strong and inspirational registered manager leads her team by example. The dedicated staff team works exceptionally hard to ensure that young people have the high-quality care that they need and deserve.
- Staff feel supported in their role and have regular supervision, team meetings and appraisals. As a result, they are given sufficient opportunities to reflect on their practice and they receive recognition for the excellent work they do with the young people.
- Training courses for staff reflect young people's individual needs. As a result, staff are very well equipped to meet the young people's needs effectively.
- Partnership working is effective and the registered manager is not afraid to

challenge professionals, thus ensuring that the young people receive the services agreed.

- Professionals and parents have absolute confidence that the management and the staff team meet the young people's needs extremely well.

Recent inspection history - This is the home's first inspection.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The home was registered with Ofsted in August 2017. Previously, the manager and staff operated a mobile outreach service for young people. This home now acts as a central point enabling young people to experience longer periods of care, support and accommodation. Other properties and facilities are used for packages of outreach care over a specific agreed time, providing the young people with an assessment of their needs. Where young people are assessed as needing longer periods of care, support and accommodation, then this will be covered under this home's current registration.

The registered manager and the staff team succeed in delivering highly individualised care to each young person. And, from the young people's first time in the home or outreach service, they make significant progress in comparison to their previous chaotic lifestyles. The management team and staff encourage attachments from the point of accommodation, and encourage openness and diversity as part of the young people's daily routines. As a result, the young people develop excellent relationships with each other and with the staff. Feedback from the young people about the home, staff and the services they use is extremely positive. Comments included:

- 'I learned skills and self-confidence.'
- 'They have made me feel sure if going back to the other home is the right choice for me.'
- 'They gave me guidance and boundaries.'
- 'They made sure I didn't rush to go back to my home area.'
- 'The staff were all lovely.'
- 'The staff kept me on the straight and narrow and also kept me away from bad influences.'

All of the young people are in education and have made remarkable progress from the time they came into the home or service. The organisation employs qualified teachers and has its own dedicated classroom space and excellent facilities separate from the home. Some young people attend this facility, while other young people attend mainstream school. Other young people attend mainstream school, have part-time jobs or are educated in the home or in other service properties. A teacher told the inspector how much she notices the positive changes made by the young people. The teacher puts this down to the level of therapeutic care that the young people receive in the home and the service. She clearly feels that this level of attainment and progress is helping to boost the young people's confidence.

All of the young people are aiming to achieve recognised qualifications. The registered manager has made links to a local educational project which will enable the young people to extend these qualifications to GCSE level. Considering the young people's previous school disruption, often as a result of multiple placement moves, it is a

significant development that they are now learning, and this will place them in a better position for their futures in further education, training or employment.

Young people's health, social and psychological needs are identified and met. They are registered with local medical services and have access to external professionals or the home's own staff, who are trained in specific models of care and therapeutic interventions. This supports the young people's emotional, physical and psychological needs. The young people are engaged in the planning of menus and preparation of healthy meals, and they enjoy a well-balanced diet.

Research-informed practice is embedded into the home and the services provided to the young people. The model of playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy (PACE) runs through the home's services, and this supports the young people. Staff are trained in attachment theory, and young people have access to the organisation's trained attachment worker. As a result, young people settle, buy into the planned programme of engagement and quickly change their behaviours.

The home and outreach service are registered with the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA). This means that the young people enjoy new and exciting experiences under the supervision of trained and competent outdoor activity professionals. The designated coordinator is a staff member who is assessed by the AALA annually, and who ensures that all outdoor activities, policies and procedures are up to date. This staff member also oversees staff training, and ensures that all staff are fully trained and competent to supervise the young people during outdoor activities.

As a result, the young people have an opportunity to try new experiences which they fully engage in and enjoy. Examples include hill walking and mountaineering, kayaking, open canoeing, stand-up paddle boarding, ghyll scrambling, open water swimming, climbing, abseiling, mountain biking, bush craft, caving and mining, slack lining and orienteering. The young people's engagement in these activities is captured, and as part of their memory boxes they receive DVDs which will enable them to look back on their progress and challenges when they are ready to leave the home or service.

The staff fully involve the young people in their plans. The staff listen to young people and take their views seriously. There are weekly meetings where innovative plans and ideas are discussed and arranged. For example, young people have participated in the 'young inspector' programme where they assess to see if their home is providing them with all of the services and care outlined in regulation and guidance. Daily conversations raise awareness and make the young people think about world events and current news stories. The level to which the staff listen to young people and engage with them helps to ensure that the young people feel fully involved in their care and their daily lives.

Staff provide an exceptional level of support to help each young person move on to the next stage of their life, whether that be a return home or their transition into adulthood and independence. Individualised programmes for young people, which teach them about essential life skills, are thoroughly and creatively implemented. A social worker said: 'I have had many dealings with residential homes but this one is by far the best.'

They have detailed plans which enable the young people to enjoy their time in the service and consider their future plans for moving on from the home.'

Staff help the young people to maintain regular contact with their families, when this is safe and appropriate. They make sure that they follow agreed contact arrangements and provide the young people with both practical and emotional support. Transport arrangements and overnight stays are arranged to ensure that the young people keep in touch with those people who are important to them.

This central home is close to the other properties used by the young people, all of which are located outside towns and cities in rural countryside. The design of each of the home's living areas provides the young people with excellent quality accommodation, privacy and opportunities to enjoy a range of stimulating and educational activities. Young people also enjoy having access to a static caravan for breaks during the summer holidays. The young people have access to a wide range of musical instruments which they learn to play and can then use, and this forms part of the therapeutic input they receive.

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

Young people living in the home, and those in accommodation away from the home, told the inspector that they feel safe and protected. The young people's previously high-risk vulnerabilities, such as gang association, grooming and child sexual exploitation, have significantly reduced. There is an exceptionally low incidence of the young people going missing or taking part in other risk-taking activities. The location of the home and services contribute to this risk reduction. The staff have an excellent understanding of the young people's vulnerabilities and are trained to recognise, respond to and report any suspicions of abuse.

Working in partnership with placing authorities, the organisation's safeguarding manager ensures that agencies are brought together in multi-agency meetings to discuss and agree strategies for protecting young people, all of which are fully understood by the staff. Young people's individual risk assessments are detailed and regularly reviewed, and staff responses demonstrate their knowledge well in relation to the strategies agreed for individual young people.

In order to keep the young people protected, senior managers chose to use the Barnahus model to establish a child-centred response to sexual abuse. There are a number of important aspects of the design and function of the Barnahus model which the safeguarding manager, registered manager and staff have implemented to support the young people who may be suspected of or subjected to sexual abuse. This involves close cooperation with all agencies and the criminal justice process.

Training has been completed around all aspects of abuse, radicalisation, bullying, self-harm and internet safety. The young people living in the home or using the services provided are thoroughly protected by staff who are trained and competent to do so. As a result, and considering the rural locations, this keeps the young people increasingly safe.

The home and its associated properties are very settled environments. Staff manage young people's behaviours exceptionally well. Incidents of self-harm have significantly reduced from when the young people first arrived at the home or its associated services. Positive relationships, clear and consistent boundaries, proactive strategies and incentive schemes are all highly effective. These, along with a restorative approach, help the young people to reflect on their behaviours. The records show that rewards for young people's positive behaviour far outweigh any consequences imposed for inappropriate behaviour.

Young people have clear and individualised behaviour management plans, and the manager consistently monitors and analyses behaviour. This shows the measures staff take to avoid restraints taking place. Should a restraint be used, the young person's views are always sought by an independent person. As a result of this monitoring, and the staff's understanding of what triggers young people's behaviours, the use of restraint is rare and only as a last resort.

Recruitment procedures are thorough, and of a very high standard. The management team keeps track of the recruitment checks on new and existing staff. This ensures that the organisation's human resources department is compliant with regulations and that nothing, checks and balances, slips through the net. Young people are very much involved in the recruitment process. They have received training and have put together 12 tough questions which they ask prospective new starters during the interview process. Young people clearly have a say in who will be caring and providing services for them.

Young people live in a safe environment with all necessary health and safety checks in place. Young people take part in fire evacuation drills and know what action to take in the event of a fire. Designated staff are delegated responsibility for key areas, ensuring that all health and safety matters are monitored, checked and recorded. These arrangements keep the young people, staff and visitors safe in the home and its associated services.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is highly qualified and very experienced. She is aspirational for young people and fully committed to them. Her high standards and expectations ensure that young people are provided with every opportunity to successfully reach their potential. She worked for nine years in a childcare setting, and before this time for seven years as an outdoor activity practitioner. She has completed her level 5 diploma in management, and holds a degree in outdoor, environment and educational activities along with a variety of national governing body outdoor qualifications.

The management team motivates the staff by identifying their strengths. There are clear systems in place which recognise, celebrate and reward staff's good practice and achievements, based on the work they carry out with the young people. The staff team is well established and is cohesive. Consistent staffing ensures that young people are

well supported, and are able to develop lasting relationships. This supports the young people to make very good progress. Young people who have moved on from the home or services often keep in touch, with some asking if they can come back. This demonstrates the strong attachments they formed and their acknowledgements of the progress they made.

Supervision is highly effective. Staff report receiving regular, high-quality supervision where a range of subject matters are discussed, including the needs of the young people. Staff regularly reflect on their practice and discuss the young people who they are caring for. Regular team meetings also enable staff to discuss practice and consider the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Continued professional development is seen as important and is prioritised. Productive team meetings and high-quality supervision ensure that practice is monitored, and that improvements are continually made regarding the care and services provided to the young people.

Staff, particularly those who have worked in other organisations, speak very highly of the support and training that they receive. All staff have training targets which cover outdoor pursuits, along with specified responsibilities to provide educational training and support to the young people. For example, they engage the young people in young recruiter training, risk and misadventure considerations, opening a savings account, animal welfare, farming and agriculture, sewing, cooking, exercise, nutrition, weights, make-up artistry and domestic home management responsibilities. There is an excellent designated training facility available to the staff which is separate from the home. Often, the young people join the staff and take part in training. Certificates are awarded and displayed in the home. This significantly contributes to the young people's well-being and provides them with a sense of belonging.

The statement of purpose and children's guide documents are detailed and provide the young people, their families and external stakeholders with clear objectives and details of how these are to be met. The young people learn about other faiths and cultures and celebrate festivities, and the staff are trained in and encourage equality and diversity. This inclusive approach enables the young people to express their individual identity, with complete acceptance by all who care for them.

Feedback following consultation gathered from a number of professionals about the running of the home and its associated services is exceptional. The management team and staff have developed excellent working relationships with a number of external professionals. The manager has a forward-thinking approach, is innovative in relation to her vision and always ensures that the young people's views are considered. The arrangements and support provided to the young people are worthy of dissemination, and the management team, staff and the organisation work well with the local authority in which the home and its associated services are located, as well as the young people's placing authorities.

The management team and senior leaders in the organisation spend time with the young people and have a very good knowledge of their needs and the progress that they are making. The staff use monitoring tools, monthly reports and the visits by the

independent person to keep a close eye on how the young people are doing, and if necessary will challenge a placing authority to ensure that the young people receive the service that they deserve. This is indicative of a service that is committed to providing an outstanding level of care for the young people.

No requirements or recommendations have been made.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 16 Wootton Way, Carlisle CA2 6SW

Responsible individual: Clare Houghton

Registered manager: Hannah Winn

Inspector

Mark Kersh, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018