

1266838

Registered provider: Active Ark Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children and young people who have social and emotional difficulties.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 June 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 12 April 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/04/2018	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
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; and take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(vi))	31/07/2018
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 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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))	31/07/2018
If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of the name of the person so appointed and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (2) (a)(b))	31/07/2018
The registered person must maintain records for each child which are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(c))	31/07/2018
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review	31/07/2018

("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must supply to HMCI a copy of the quality care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (1)(3) and (4)(a))	
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

This home has been unable to demonstrate that it can yet provide good help and support to children and young people. Managers and staff have yet to embed recent improvements to ensure that children and young people receive a good standard of care.

The young person that was living in the home at the time of the last inspection has since moved to another children's home. Currently, there are no children or young people resident in the home.

The home offers good access to mainstream and alternative schools in the area. Staff encourage children and young people's attendance at school and try to support learning within the home and wider community. However, despite staff's best efforts, the last young person had exhausted all local education options and was permanently excluded from school prior to his move.

Staff promote the importance of healthy lifestyles and particularly healthy eating. They are proactive in seeking medical advice if they believe children and young people's eating habits are of concern. They have recently undertaken further training to increase their knowledge and awareness to support children and young people who may misuse illegal drugs or other substances.

The home has revised arrangements and introduced a key-worker system within the staff team. This makes sure that children and young people have an identified staff member, as well as the manager, to go to when they have an issue or something to discuss. Additionally, this means that there is a named staff member that is responsible for monitoring progress and coordinating arrangements in accordance with the placement planning.

The home has created additional opportunities to ensure that children and young people's views and wishes are taken into account. In addition to identified key workers, arrangements now exist to provide regular house meetings.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff's response to two recent incidents was not robust or proactive. Assumptions that a young person was in his room and delay in checking meant that on one occasion, a

young person had been missing from the home for a number of hours overnight before staff became aware.

Although this incident was followed up by increased night-time supervision, the young person was more vulnerable on this occasion as staff were unaware that he was out in the community. However, overall since the last inspection there have been fewer reported incidents of children and young people missing from this home.

Children and young people's individual risk assessments have improved. This includes clarification of the protocol staff should follow in specific circumstances. However, some minor inconsistencies were identified within the individual risk assessments that would cause the reader some ambiguity about how frequently checks should be made. Potentially this could compromise children and young people's safety.

Staff and managers have acted promptly to rectify health and safety concerns previously raised during inspection. All hazardous and dangerous items are now stored safely in a locked cupboard in the manager's office.

The office is to remain locked and children and young people are no longer allowed to have access to the office. Measures are in place to lessen the likelihood of children and young people leaving the property without staff knowledge. Together, these measures promote children and young people's safety.

Staff deal with challenging behaviour in a calm and supportive manner. Restraint and sanctions are rarely used.

Suitable documentation now exists to record sanctions and missing from home events. This satisfies information required by regulation. Additionally, it is available for monitoring purposes and will contribute to the quality of care review.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager is currently absent from the home and Ofsted have been advised that another manager will lead the home in the interim. The interim manager is suitably qualified and has previous experience of managing a children's home. At present, there is some uncertainty about the future management arrangements for this home.

Staff are working more effectively together. Team meetings have been re-established and arrangements have been made to ensure that staff receive formal supervision and management support. Appraisals are not yet due, but are scheduled for later this year.

The interim manager has established arrangements to monitor activity within the home, delegating certain tasks as appropriate to the staff team. External monitoring arrangements are currently being reviewed to make sure that there is more rigorous scrutiny of the home.

Ofsted has not received a quality of care review which was due to be provided by the registered manager. At this time, it is accepted that the incoming interim manager may have difficulty in providing this retrospectively, with the lack of monitoring activity identified at the last inspection.

The interim manager has updated the home's statement of purpose to reflect staffing changes. Ofsted has been provided with a copy of this.

A number of essential documents that were missing have been re-established in the home. These include the register of those children and young people that come to live at the home, and a record of complaints. It was noted that some documents are not routinely signed and dated by the author. Consequently, it is hard to accurately tell how current and relevant the document is.

Although the home has an electronic recording system, it is not yet sufficiently robust to meet staff and other professionals' needs on a day-to-day basis. Children and young people's records are now also available to staff in paper copy. This allows staff to be more creative in how they manage children and young people's information and ensures that a paper copy of essential information is available should the electronic system fail.

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: 1266838

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Active Ark Limited

Registered provider address: Armstrong Watson, Birbeck House, Duke Street,
Penrith CA11 7NA

Responsible individual: Louise Matthews

Registered manager: Graham Abernethy

Inspector

Gillian Walters, social care inspector

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