

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, irrespective of gender, who have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The current registered manager was registered with Ofsted on 22 November 2017.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 April 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor, and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date

Inspection type

Inspection judgement

None

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 children's views and wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who– take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to– ensure that staff– regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) and (2)(iv))	30/05/2018
The health and well-being standard is that– children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure– that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(b) and (2)(c))	30/05/2018
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 staff– assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account	30/05/2018

information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1)(a) and (2)(a)(i) and (vi))	
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)(a) and (2)(b))	30/05/2018
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads the culture in relation to the children's home that– helps children aspire to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to– understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a) and (2)(f))	30/05/2018
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads the culture in relation to the children's home that– helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to– lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(a))	30/05/2018

The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads the culture in relation to the children's home that– promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to– ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) and (2)(b))	30/05/2018
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads the culture in relation to the children's home that– promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to– ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) and (2)(e))	30/05/2018
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads the culture in relation to the children's home that– promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to– use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvement in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) and (2)(h))	30/05/2018
The care standard is that children– receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure–	30/05/2018

that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; and that each child's relevant plans are followed. Specifically, that local authority care plans and other essential documentation is available for each child to inform their placement planning. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) and (b) and (2)(a) and (c))	
The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a) and (b))	30/05/2018
The registered person must ensure that all employees– undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a–c))	30/05/2018
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 name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;	30/05/2018

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)–(viii)) This relates specifically to the home having a comprehensive record of sanctions.	
The registered person must ensure that– within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (the authorised person)– has spoken to the user about the measure; has signed a record to confirm it is accurate; and within five 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)(b)(i)(ii) and (c))	30/05/2018
The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which– include the information and documents listed in schedule 3 in relation to each child. In particular, the date and circumstances of all incidents where a child goes missing from the home, including any information relating to the child’s whereabouts during the period of absence. (Regulation 36 (1)(a) schedule 3, paragraph 14))	30/05/2018
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children’s home. The registered person must – maintain in the home the records in schedule 4. Specifically, the registered person must maintain a record in the form of a register showing in respect of each child– the date of the child’s admission to the children’s home; the date on which the child ceased to be accommodated in the	30/05/2018

home; the child's address immediately before being accommodated in the home; the child's address on leaving the home; the child's placing authority; and the statutory provision (if any) under which the child is accommodated. (Regulation 37 (1) and (2)(a), schedule 4 (1) (a-f))	
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	30/05/2018
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if– an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b) and (e))	30/05/2018
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (a quality of care review) at least once every six months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring reviewing and evaluating– the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) and (2)(a-c))	30/05/2018

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children and young people are not adequately protected from harm and remain vulnerable. Ineffective pre-placement planning has resulted in a lack of progress and poor experiences for children and young people. Further weaknesses in leadership and management and safeguarding practice have led to this inadequate judgement.

Children and young people's views and wishes are not well reflected in placement planning. There is no consistent way for children and young people to contribute their views and ideas. For example, children and young people's meetings are not established in this home. Additionally, children and young people do not have identified key workers, with whom they can establish a good rapport to feel safe to discuss their feelings.

Staff struggle to maintain boundaries and consistently manage children and young people's challenging behaviour. This has made some staff feel vulnerable, and they have moved to other homes within the company. Consequently, children and young people have experienced inconsistency in their care arrangements due to staff changes. This hinders their opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with staff.

The home has suffered considerable damage since it opened. The registered manager has been quick to arrange repairs to maintain the comfort and homeliness of the property.

Children and young people's health remains a concern, particularly for those misusing illegal substances. Staff are slow to seek medical advice and make sure that children and young people have good access to the specialist services they require. This causes delay in promoting their physical health and emotional well-being.

Children and young people lack structure in their lives. They are not attending school or engaged with alternative education provision, despite good cooperation from the home regarding working in partnership with education providers and the local authority's virtual school team.

Professionals have expressed a lack of confidence in the home. One social worker commented, 'I feel we were oversold what they were capable of providing in terms of managing his behaviour.'

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

Children and young people remain vulnerable and at risk of harm. Risk-taking behaviours, such as going missing from the home and the misuse of illegal substances,

have not significantly declined.

Individual risk assessments fail to take account of children and young people's identified risks. Therefore, staff do not always have the knowledge or necessary guidance to keep children and young people safe. For example, for one young person guidance was not documented on how to respond should he return to the home under the influence of some illegal substance. In this situation, both the young person and staff were vulnerable.

Missing-from-home episodes have been a regular occurrence. Essential records of occasions when children and young people go missing have not been kept. Consequently, opportunities have been missed to review and amend strategies to minimise missing-from-home episodes in order to keep children and young people safe.

Despite staff understanding about the safe storage of hazardous and dangerous items, these have not been securely stored to prevent children and young people having access to them. Such items were observed in an unlocked cupboard. Additionally, one young person produced a sharp kitchen knife from an unlocked drawer. The registered manager immediately rectified storage arrangements. However, this practice compromised the safety of children, young people and others.

Staff rarely use physical intervention. They identify the use of rewards and sanctions as part of their behaviour management strategy. However, their effectiveness could not be determined as rewards and sanctions are not documented and therefore could not be reviewed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home is not currently providing good outcomes for children or young people, or working in accordance with its statement of purpose, which describes the home's culture as child-centred.

Internal monitoring arrangements are not established. As a result, the registered manager is unable to reliably identify what positive impact the home is having on children and young people's lives. There is no evidence of scrutiny or reflection to help staff learn from their practice or inform their future development.

External monitoring arrangements are satisfactory. Ofsted receives regular reports that successfully identify recommendations to improve practice and the home's arrangements to meet children and young people's safety and well-being needs. The registered manager has not routinely acted on recommendations made to secure necessary improvements.

Staff are not well supported in their roles. Arrangements are not sufficiently robust to ensure that staff receive regular supervision. Minimal opportunities exist for them to come together to plan and evaluate their work as a team. Staff meetings are not a

regular occurrence. When they do happen, attendance is described as poor. Meetings are not recorded, so information sharing is therefore limited. At best, this means that children and young people's care is not well coordinated to meet their needs.

The company has recently implemented a new electronic recording system to maintain children and young people's records, and activity that occurs in the home. Omissions found in children and young people's electronic records fail to ensure that staff have a complete knowledge and understanding of the children and young people. Without any hard-copy documents, staff acknowledge difficulty in accessing information on those occasions when the electronic system fails.

The registered manager is unable to demonstrate how effective the home is in dealing with concerns or complaints. One complaint has been received since the home opened, but this has not been documented as required. It is unclear if this has informed or improved practice in the home.

Ofsted has not been informed of all serious events that have occurred in the home, including those that have required police involvement. Consequently, there is a lack of transparency with the regulator and other relevant partners.

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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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>

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