

1266838

Registered provider: Active Ark Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider operates this home. It is registered to provide care for up to three children. At the time of the inspection, there was one child living in the home.

The registered manager post has been vacant since December 2020. A manager was appointed in April 2023. However, at the time of the visit, they had not yet submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

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: 10 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/03/2022	Full	Good
11/12/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/07/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The manager and staff provide the child with consistent care. The manager's plans are understood and followed by staff. However, he does not have the local authority care plan or placement plan for the child. This is a missed opportunity to inform his care planning to provide the child with individualised care.

The manager and staff have successfully supported the child into a new school. The manager works closely with educational professionals. Positive feedback was shared from a teacher, who said, 'The home has been brilliant at supporting us. I feel we are working very well together, and communication is very good.'

Staff prioritise children's health and well-being and encourage them to attend routine health appointments. This supports the child to remain healthy and ensure their health needs are met.

Staff build positive relationships with the child. The inspector observed caring relationships between the staff and the child. The child's views, wishes and feelings are taken into consideration, which allows them to make choices and decisions about their care.

Staff support the child to see their family members regularly. This helps the child to maintain relationships with people that are important to them.

A child has moved on from the home in a sensitively planned way. This has supported the child to settle well into their new home. The manager should ensure that the register of children book should detail where the child has moved from and where the child has moved to.

The home is in good repair, and there are lots of photos of the child on display. The child has personalised their own bedroom. The home would benefit from a redecoration to the lounge, vacant bedroom and the downstairs bathroom and door. This would make the rooms more inviting for the child to use.

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

The manager and staff have a good understanding of the child's risk-taking behaviours and follow robust plans to reduce risk. However, the manager has not received relevant documents from the local authority and the police. This means he is unable to assure himself that required actions around the safety of the child have been addressed.

On occasion, the child has gone missing from care. The staff have been proactive in

their approach to try and locate the child and return the child home safely in line with protocols. Independent return home interviews are offered. Staff speak to the child to look for triggers to enable strategies to be put in place to reduce the risk.

Staff have not had to physically intervene to manage the child's behaviour. Staff have been able to de-escalate any negative behaviour effectively due to the positive relationships they have with the child. Staff are trained in physical intervention and de-escalation in case the need arises.

Staff have not been trained in some risk-taking behaviours that are relevant to the child, such as knife crime and gang affiliation. This does not support staff to manage the specific risks or ensure they continue to be able to meet the needs of the child.

Motion sensors are installed on the staircase. They are used to support the staff to safeguard the child. The management team has not ensured that written consent from the child's social worker or the child is in place. This has not been regularly reviewed.

The management team has not notified Ofsted in a timely manner of a significant incident that took place. The incident was managed effectively. However, this does not allow for effective monitoring and scrutiny by the regulator.

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

The new manager has been in post since April 2023 and is yet to apply to be registered with Ofsted. He is enrolled on the relevant management qualification. Staff say they feel supported by him, and he is making some positive changes.

One staff member said, 'I would like to express my confidence in the management and the adequacy of care provided.' The manager has identified some shortfalls with the leadership and management of the home and has adequate plans in place to address these.

Staff do not receive regular supervision. Staff have not had their performance appraised or have attended regular team meetings. This does not allow the staff time to reflect on their practice or allow the manager to evaluate their performance to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the child and continue their professional development.

Induction to the home is thorough, which supports new staff in their role. However, the manager has not received an induction, nor has he had supervision from the responsible individual since commencing in his role. This does not allow the responsible individual to assure herself that the manager is managing the expectations of the role.

External monitoring of the home by the independent visitor has not been robust or consistent. The management team has taken action to address this shortfall and has

identified a new visitor to carry out the role.

The children's handbook was not up to date, and it required the details of the Children's Commissioner for England. This would enable the children to make contact to be supported in promoting their rights.

A review of the quality of care in February 2023 lacks feedback from parents, staff and children. It is not evaluative or analytical of the care provided for the previous six months. It lacks a robust action plan. This does not allow the manager to plan and develop the home and staff team effectively.

The manager is in the process of developing a monitoring and evaluation system to support the home's development. This will enable the manager to have a clear understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses and to take swift action when shortfalls arise.

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
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1) (2)(c)(i)) This is specifically in relation to the redecoration of the lounge, children's bedroom, the downstairs bathroom and bathroom door.	6 August 2023
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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)) This is specifically in relation to staff receiving training on risks relevant to the children and the registered provider having strategy meeting minutes on file so any actions can be acted on.	6 August 2023

The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires, and leads a 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— demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(g)(i)(h))	6 August 2023
The care planning 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— that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) This is specifically in relation to the registered provider having the children's relevant care plans from the local authority to inform their planning.	6 August 2023
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance.	6 August 2023

(Regulation 24 (1)(b)(c))	
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. 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 (1)(a) (4)(a)(b)(c)) This is specifically in relation to all staff and the manager.	6 August 2023
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; ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)) This is specifically in relation to the register of children.	6 August 2023
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or	6 August 2023

concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives, and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5) (7)(a))	6 August 2023
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;	6 August 2023

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.

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 ("the quality of care review report").

The registered person must—

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed.

(Regulation 45 (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a))

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the children's guide helps children to understand how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)

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: 1266838

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Active Ark Limited

Registered provider address: Active Ark, Unit E, Baron Way, Kingmoor Business Park, Carlisle CA6 4SJ

Responsible individual: Louise Matthews

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Julie Elder, Social Care Inspector

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