

1266838

Active Ark Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It provides care for up to three children who have social and/or emotional difficulties. The previous registered manager resigned their post in April 2020. A new manager has recently been appointed internally, and starts in post in March 2021. From April 2020 to the present, a registered manager from another of the company's homes has provided some interim management.

Inspection date: 23 February 2021

This monitoring visit

This remote visit was planned because currently the home does not have a registered manager, and there is not yet an application to Ofsted in progress. The post has been vacant for a period well exceeding six months and it has also been over a year since the home was last inspected.

Several shortfalls in practice have been identified as a result of this monitoring visit. These shortfalls mainly relate to the quality and long-term nature of the interim management arrangements. In particular, due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, the interim manager's support has been largely off site and remote.

Several documents, such as children's risk assessments, have not been well reviewed and updated. For example, risk assessments contain a lot of historical and irrelevant information. Children's care plans lack important information about their culture, religion and identity.

An incident occurred with one of the children where it was necessary to use physical intervention. During this incident, the child made an allegation against a staff member and later retracted this, indicating that it had been said in anger. The record of the physical intervention was poorly completed and did not accurately reflect the child's words. Additionally, colloquialisms were used that would be unlikely to help the child understand the events in the future.

The placing authority raised this incident as a concern with the relevant local authority for the children's home, and ultimately concluded that the child had been safeguarded, but the matter had been poorly reported. In addition, Ofsted did not receive a notification concerning this matter. Consequently, the home was less than transparent about the event.

Staff have not recently benefited from regular supervision, a wide range of training opportunities or an annual appraisal. Despite this, they said that they have felt supported by managers, who they know are 'always at the end of a phone'.

Care staff have been instrumental in organising shifts between themselves, ensuring continuity of care for children and minimising the number of adults they have had to encounter during this national pandemic.

Despite the number of shortfalls identified, children living at the home have remained remarkably settled and their progress appears to have been largely unaffected. Staff ensure that children understand the need for the current government restrictions, and assist them to know how to keep themselves safe through good hygiene practices and social distancing guidance.

Both children currently in placement spoke to the inspector during this visit via an online video call. One child helpfully assisted the inspector to see around the home using a mobile phone video application. The home remains very comfortable and homely, and children's bedrooms are decorated and accessorised with their chosen belongings.

Both children have a strong sense of belonging at this home, and expressed clearly their wishes to remain here at this home for some considerable time. Social workers confirmed that the home is providing a positive long-term placement for both children. One social worker commented, 'He's thrived between there and school. He is on track and he is on a career path. He has matured and he really loves it there. He is safe and well cared for.'

Children share very positive relationships with staff and enjoy living at the home. They have continued to attend school and are reported to be making very positive progress. One child's teacher described him as potentially having made lifelong friendships at school, and said how much he is looking forward to moving with his classmates to secondary school. The teacher commented, 'He worships the staff at the home. He tells me that staff just get him. [Name of staff member] is a great role model for him.'

Internal and external monitoring have proved less effective since the last inspection. Reports by the independent person are insufficiently robust and are not always sent to Ofsted within the required timescale. In addition, two six-monthly quality of care review reports have not been completed. This has again reduced the transparency of

practice. Requirements and recommendations resulting from this visit are intended to improve the quality of practice.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/12/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/07/2019	Full	Good
08/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/06/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) This specifically relates to the provider keeping children's risk assessments under review, up to date and accurate.	30 April 2021
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— 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; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—	30 April 2021

research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; use monitoring to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that regular staff team meetings occur, and that account is taken of feedback received and other monitoring activity to assist the home's planning for improvement.	
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 arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)) This relates specifically to ensuring that the home's care plans are sufficiently detailed and consider the child's gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, any disability, their assessed needs, previous experiences and any relevant plans.	30 April 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))	30 April 2021

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; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; 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 the record to confirm it is accurate; 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)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))	30 April 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—	30 April 2021

there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	
The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44 (7)(a)) This relates to ensuring that Ofsted receives each monthly report and receives reports within the agreed timescale.	30 April 2021
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. 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. 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; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))	30 April 2021

This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that reports are appropriately completed, and that Ofsted receives a quality of care review report every six months within the prescribed timescale.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping, understanding the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. This includes recording in a non-stigmatising way and avoiding use of colloquialisms that may not be understood by the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that the appointed independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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

Gillian Walters, Social Care Inspector

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