

1275649

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of a number operated by a private company. The home is currently registered for four young people and has requested a variation to increase its number of registered places to six. Young people are accepted for placements irrespective of gender and may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home has three outreach provisions that are also used to provide individual 'crisis' placements for young people before they are admitted to the 'hub' home. There has been no registered manager in post since November 2018. However, suitable management arrangements have been in place, with a manager appointed and a service manager in post in the interim period. The current manager is in the process of submitting her application to the regulator.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 July 2019

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 **good**

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: 19 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/11/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people placed at this home make exceptional progress from the beginning of their placement, the only exception to this being a young person whose extensive risks were not identified at the point of placement. Young people are placed at the home due to extreme risks. Staff work exceptionally hard to help them to understand and reduce those risks. They are encouraged to take part in a vast array of activities, some of which are adrenaline-filled and replace their unregulated risks with more managed risk-taking experiences.

Most young people placed in the home are hopeful that they can eventually return to their families, or at least their home areas. This has been achieved for a high number of young people placed, which evidences the fantastic progress they make and the significant reduction of their risks.

Young people are supported to build their confidence and self-esteem through the highly positive and nurturing care provided by the dedicated and committed staff team. Young people feel cared about and staff often go the extra mile to help and support them. Young people who do not make eye contact or communicate any views, wishes or feelings at the start of the placement really flourish and find their voice.

Feedback from stakeholders is highly positive. For example, one social worker reported: 'He has made excellent progress. He has found his voice and can express his views. He has excellent relationships with staff. The staff team are faultless and amazing. The home is fantastic at working to our plan for him, they are supporting his transition and have been very supportive of family contact. They celebrate him in bucketloads. He has had an amazing outcome.'

The company is developing a mental health action group and one young person won the competition to design a logo for the group. He was exceptionally proud of this and felt that he had never won anything before.

Unusual requests are facilitated where possible for the young people. For example, they have learned how to care for chickens and now have four chickens which were rescued from a battery farm. Young people requested their own space to play PlayStation, music, pool and darts. This has been provided for them and they have devised their own set of rules for the use of the room. This shows that they feel listened to and that their views are acted on.

Staff are especially good at identifying and promoting young people's interests. One young person has a talent and interest in bicycle and motor mechanics. He has been given his own personal workspace to develop into a workshop which he uses to tinker with his bikes and engines. This provides him with a calming space that helps when he feels anxious or stressed. It also enables him to build on his significant talents and abilities in this area, which will help him secure future work. Another young person has a

talent for carpentry and has worked so well in his work placement that he has been offered an apprenticeship there. Staff are quick to recognise talent and build relationships with young people through engaging them in things which interest them.

Transitions into and out of the service are well planned and implemented. One young person, who is preparing to move on, had a day out quad biking with staff and another young person. One of the young people described this day to the inspector as 'the best day of my life'.

The on-site education is delivered by a committed and highly creative teacher. One young person has been helped to learn the alphabet and tell the time, which significantly improves his chances in education and career success in the future.

Staff are trained in the pathway for adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and therefore have a good understanding of how young people's experiences as children affect them as they grow into adulthood.

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

Most young people come to the home after a period in one of the company's outreach homes that provide care to young people in crisis due to their extremely elevated safeguarding concerns. They are provided with two-to-one support in remote locations to manage their initial risks. They are then admitted into one of the company's 'hub' homes where they may be placed with other young people and a lower staff ratio.

Staff have very good understanding of young people's risks due to a good training package which covers issues such as gangs, child sexual exploitation and contextual safeguarding. The company is using innovative practice in respect of contextual safeguarding to the extent that the service manager now sits on a university advisory group and has been invited to undertake a doctorate in this area.

Risks are clearly identified and recorded in young people's risk assessments. These are treated as live documents which are regularly updated. Staff team meetings are used to review risk assessments, make sure that they are contemporary and that all staff are familiar with them.

Episodes of going missing from home is often one of the key issues to be addressed for the young people prior to admission. Missing-from-home incidents reduce considerably. When they do occur, staff make every effort to stay in touch with the young person and ensure that they are safe and well.

Staff at the home are not risk-averse and go to great lengths to facilitate young people taking part in risky activities safely. There are a wide range of activities on offer in which risks are managed and mitigated so that young people can participate. As well as a wide range of outdoor activities, more unusual risks are considered. One example is a young person requesting whether a staff member's dogs could sleep in his bedroom overnight. This was risk assessed and facilitated, which provided a highly positive experience for

the young person.

Direct work is undertaken with young people through Assist, Respect, Comfort and Help (ARCH). This helps them better understand their risks, particularly in respect to contextual safeguarding concerns and enables them to work towards reducing their risks. Work is undertaken with young people in a way that interests them and does not stigmatise or label them, which means that they are more likely to engage.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Although there has been no registered manager in post since November 2018, there has been no detrimental impact on the way the home is managed or the leadership of the staff team. A manager has been recruited and trained. In the interim period, the service manager has overseen the management of the home, alongside the development of the incoming manager. The manager is in the process of submitting an application for registration.

The new manager has made numerous positive developments to the home, including implementing a number of new systems. A Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed (RACI) matrix system has been implemented so that all levels of staff and managers know what they are responsible for and there are clear lines of accountability.

Staff feel both supported and empowered by the manager because she is not restrictive about management tasks and delegates appropriately so that the members of the staff team have opportunities to develop. She is also particularly good at identifying staff talents and exploiting those to their full potential, which means that everyone feels they make a valuable and unique contribution. Staff feel valued and respected. They feel confident to put forward their views and believe they will be listened to.

Incidents are used to help staff and managers to reflect on their practice and identify whether any improvements could be made. This helps staff learn and develop good practice. It also helps them develop confidence in their roles.

Managers make good decisions about who comes to live in the home. New impact assessments have been implemented for young people who are initially matched to the crisis/outreach provisions. Matching for the two young people currently placed in the hub home has been exceptionally successful and they have developed a strong and positive bond, with the older young person providing a role model for the younger. Where placements have not been successful, managers have learned from this and taken that learning forwards.

Strong links with external agencies ensure that positive relationships are built. Agencies contacted as part of this inspection were highly positive about the quality of care and communication. Managers work hard to develop positive relationships within the local community and the home has become better integrated because of this. One example of this is a neighbour helping a young person use an engine from a petrol mower as part of his attempt to rebuild a quad bike.

The manager has excellent oversight of the home and uses internal and external monitoring to drive continuous improvement. She takes her managerial responsibilities for running the home smoothly seriously.

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: 1275649

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Ltd

Registered provider address: Manor House, Brisco, Carlisle, Cumberland CA4 0QS

Responsible individual: Clare Houghton

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Charlie Bamber, social care inspector

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