

1275649

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Ltd

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There is currently no registered manager in post, and Ofsted is awaiting an application for the home's manager to register.

Inspection date: 19 February 2019

Judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 6 November 2018

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.

Senior managers for this service have recognised the weaknesses described in the home's full inspection report and have implemented a robust plan to address the deficits identified. A detailed action plan has been compiled in response to the requirements and recommendations made at the full inspection, and this interim inspection focused on the impact of the plan in respect of safeguarding young people and providing them with positive and nurturing experiences while living at the home.

Some young people have made extremely good progress and have moved on positively from the home either to semi-independence or back into their parents' care. Young people engage well with education, and a newly placed young person has made significant progress already in his education, social presentation, relationships and

personal hygiene. This young person reported that he likes living at the home and he particularly enjoys going on fishing trips. Although he has been out of education for a long time, he is willingly participating and has attained 10 out of 10 in his first ever spelling test.

A more structured referral and admission process has been developed. This includes better managerial oversight of the matching of young people to the home and consideration of their impact on young people already living there. The use of a live spreadsheet clearly shows actions that managers take to ensure that all relevant information is collated and all risks considered. The process has been shown to be effective in that planned admissions have been thoroughly considered and have, in the main, been successful. Where young people have been matched to the home but have not had a positive experience, this has been due to their risks not being identified by their placing authority and previous placements, and not due to any deficits in this home's matching and admission process. The matching process could be further developed by ensuring that impact assessments are completed for young people being matched to solo placements or into homes with vacancies, to evidence how staff can meet their needs and manage their risks. Managers are now consulting with police prior to any admissions to identify whether there would be any detrimental impact on the community if a young person were placed, which is a good example of proactive multi-agency work.

Improvements have been made to the home's records and recording systems, which has resulted in records being clear and accurate. Young people's placement plans and risk assessments are now live documents that staff are expected to add to (where relevant and appropriate) on each shift. Any additions are highlighted in the shift handover so that staff are continuously updated about young people's care and support needs. Social workers are also informed of any changes to young people's plans, which ensures that they are kept up to date. Additionally, risk assessments now have a clear traffic light system in place, which is a visual aid to staff and is easily understood. Risks that are no longer current are removed from the document so that it does not become unwieldy.

Records of physical interventions show that young people are de-briefed by a manager following an incident. Further improvements could be made by identifying the name of the manager and the date on which the de-brief took place and by giving young people further opportunities to comment if they initially chose not to do so.

Young people's risks are understood, and most young people's risks reduce while they are in placement. Some young people are making significant progress in respect of risk reduction. Other young people have had extended missing from home episodes, although there is no evidence to suggest that this is attributable to the care offered by staff. On their return, the manager ensures that their placing authority is contacted, and an independent return interview is requested and chased up if not offered. One young person was missing before he was placed and was not located throughout the time the placing authority held a bed for him at the home. Staff worked effectively and proactively with the police and placing authority to try to locate him. Another young person has had significant missing episodes, and the home has kept in touch with him

and supported him in line with the placing authority's plan. In this instance, the home has been instrumental in uncovering a network of inappropriate adult associates and drug issues, which has helped the police and placing authority to improve their understanding of the significant risk this young person is at, relating to county lines, drug dealing and criminal exploitation. All staff have been trained in these areas, and the home has sourced additional training from Safer London and an ex-gang member to ensure that staff are fully aware of, and able to identify and manage, those risks. There is a particularly strong focus on contextual safeguarding and on planning how to keep young people safe when they return to their home areas where they were previously at high risk. Managers and the independent visitor ensure that they frequently ask young people whether they feel safe in the home. Young people spoken to as part of this inspection reported feeling safe, although attributed this in part to the rural location of the home.

The staff team has become increasingly skilled and experienced. There have been no incidents in which staff have acted inappropriately or their inexperience has been evident. When young people have been admitted from other homes within the same service, some staff have come with them to help the transition process, provide consistency and assist the home's staff in learning how best to care for the young person. Similarly, staff from the home have had the opportunity to meet with staff from other homes to discuss practice. One example is the sleep and routine issues that one young person was experiencing.

Senior managers identified that the incoming manager would need support to lead and manage the home as effectively as possible. The manager has been given opportunities to shadow other managers and has also been coached and mentored by the service manager, who is now based in the home. This has been a supportive and inclusive process, which should result in the new manager having all the necessary skills to manage the home effectively and efficiently. This has, however, resulted in a delay in the registration process for the new manager, and the home plans to register the service manager in the interim. The provider has kept the regulator informed of these changes, and the inspection did not identify any concerns in respect of the home's leadership and management.

Quality assurance systems have been further developed to provide robust monitoring. Independent visitor reports have become increasingly positive, and the responsible individual is also undertaking quality assurance visits, which managers are finding helpful due to her wealth of knowledge and skills. The systems in place are effective and have addressed issues identified at the previous inspection. For example, there have been no incidents of notifiable events not being notified to the regulator.

The home is now providing safe and effective care to young people and has met each requirement and recommendation made at the previous inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/11/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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 CA4 0QS

Responsible individual: Clare Houghton

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Charlie Bamber, social care inspector

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