

1275649

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Limited

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 provides care and accommodation for up to six children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The manager was registered with Ofsted in August 2020.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 31 March 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 March 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious failures that mean children and young people are not safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 3 July 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: Following a monitoring visit to this home on 11 February 2021 two compliance notices were served under regulations 12 and 13. On the 31 March 2021, Ofsted completed a further monitoring visit to assess the action taken to address these. At the visit, the inspector found that suitable action has been taken to meet both compliance notices.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/07/2019	Full	Outstanding
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: inadequate

Serious shortfalls identified in respect of the protection of children have limited the overall progress and experiences of children living in this home. Inspectors were only able to speak with one child during this inspection. This child presented as unhappy and not positive about his care.

Shortfalls identified in meeting this child's education and health needs indicate that he is not making progress or benefiting from positive experiences in this home. For example, the food that the child consumes daily is not reflective of a healthy or balanced diet and does not promote good physical health. Furthermore, the child does not engage in a full programme of formal education. Staff are completing regular direct work in respect of healthy eating.

The manager was able to demonstrate positive outcomes in respect of education for children living in outreach services. For example, one child had sat several exams and received excellent grades. Another child had positively engaged in a work experience placement.

One child has recently moved out of the home. This child benefited from a well-planned move and returned to live with family. This means that this child had a positive experience of moving out of the home in line with his plans. Other children living within outreach services have also benefited from successful, and positive, planned moves.

Assessments completed prior to children moving into the home do not contain the necessary or required detail to establish whether children's needs can be met. Information and consultation are not sought from relevant others where possible. Missed opportunities to gather crucial information mean that children's risk-taking behaviours have not been identified or mitigated prior to moving in. Additionally, shortfalls in assessments mean that the matching of children living in the home is not considered. This does not ensure that children have positive experiences of moving into the home or that children are effectively safeguarded.

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

A serious incident occurred in the home in which a child ligatured. Fortunately, there was no serious harm to the child because of this incident. However, risk assessments in place to manage this child's behaviour were not followed, resulting in the child not being monitored or supported by an appropriate number of staff. This meant that the incident was not managed in line with the agreed strategies and procedures in place to protect this child. This hindered the response and action taken by staff during the incident and significantly reduced this child's safety.

In relation to the serious incident, risks assessments were also not updated to include obvious and significant warning signs documented in previous incident records. Consequently, there was a lack of recognition of indicators of harm for this child, and this resulted in a delay in the response and action taken by staff, which further reduced the child's safety.

Staff working with this child were not fully aware of their expected roles and responsibilities in protecting children during incidents of potential ligature. Staff were unclear of procedures such as when to call the emergency services and whether ligatures should remain taught when using cutters. This demonstrates that staff do not have the skills or understanding to manage such incidents in the home, despite previous serious and significant incidents of this nature.

Missing-from-care incidents are managed in line with policies and procedures. Inspectors viewed evidence to suggest that staff actively attempt to locate children when they are missing, actively searching potential locations and communicating with family members to ascertain the child's whereabouts and to encourage the child to return safely.

Incidents in which restrictive physical intervention has been required on several occasions. Records are clear and detailed and demonstrate that interventions are appropriate and proportionate. This improves children's safety and welfare.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager has failed to meet the requirements and recommendations made at the previous monitoring visit. This does not demonstrate that the manager is working to improve the quality of care provided to children or address weaknesses identified within the home.

Shortfalls in monitoring and review by leaders and managers mean that risk assessments have not been effectively monitored or updated to reflect all known risks to children, significant warning signs for high-risk behaviours or to ensure that staff have the appropriate guidance and direction to manage children's behaviours. This has significantly affected staff's response to children's behaviours and doesn't not demonstrate good help and protection.

Closed-circuit television (CCTV) is used to monitor the perimeters of the home daily. However, the manager had not discussed this with the child living in the home until the day of the inspection. This means that the child has been monitored for several months without discussion or explanation. Furthermore, the managers review of the CCTV does not assess the appropriateness of its use. Additionally, consent documents from those with parental responsibility aren't clear and do not evidence that the children's social workers agree with the current levels of monitoring of their child.

The manager has poor oversight of the training needs of staff working in the home. The manager was unable to provide inspectors with evidence that staff have completed training in areas such as missing-from-care, online safety, substance misuse and ligature. This does not demonstrate that staff have the appropriate skills and understanding to manage the behaviours and risks presented by children living in the home.

Senior leaders have taken the concerns raised at this inspection seriously. A robust and comprehensive action plan is in place to address the shortfalls identified. This includes increased oversight and support from senior leaders and an organisational review of the identified failings. Senior leaders and managers are keen to improve the quality of care provided and address weaknesses found in children's help and protection.

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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b))	8 May 2022
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	8 May 2022

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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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)(b) (2)(a)(c)(e)(f))	
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 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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) Specifically, impact assessments should contain the necessary detail and information to establish whether a child’s needs can be met. During placement planning, the registered manager should seek to involve those who know the child best to ensure that all relevant and available information is gathered in order to prevent and mitigate known risks to the child. This requirement was made at the previous inspection and is restated.	8 May 2022

The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the child’s placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; and 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. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(c)) Additionally, the registered person should ensure that the use of monitoring devices in the home, is reviewed regularly in relation to the level of risk for children and in accordance with their care plans. This requirement was made at the previous inspection and is restated.	8 May 2022
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. Specifically, this should be evidenced within missing-from-care records as having taken place with an independent person or social worker, and the action taken to address any concerns raised in the interview. ('Guide to Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30). This recommendation was made at the previous inspection and is restated.

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: 1275649

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Ltd

Registered provider address: Stoneybeck, Bowscar, Penrith CA11 8RP

Responsible individual: Simon Barton

Registered manager: Kathleen Walker

Inspectors

Natalie Bennett, Social Care Inspector

Charlie Bamber, Social Care Inspector

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