

2625941

Registered provider: Active Young People Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private company. It provides care for up to nine children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2023. Five children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 August 2024

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

inadequate

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: 28 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

On the 28 November 2023, an assurance visit took place. This was to assess the provider's response to the shortfalls identified at the previous full inspection. During the assurance visit, inspectors found serious and widespread concerns. These shortfalls impacted on the children's safety, protection and welfare. In response, Ofsted issued a compliance notice under Regulation 13.

On the 25 January 2024, a monitoring visit assessed the provider's response to the compliance notice. The inspector found that the registered manager had met five steps of the compliance notice. However, two were not met and were therefore reissued.

A monitoring visit took place on the 18 March 2024, to assess the provider's response to the revised compliance notice. This inspection found that the registered manager had met both steps of the compliance notice.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/06/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/02/2022	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

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

The judgement for the experience and progress of children has been impacted by significant shortfalls in the leadership and management of the home and how well children are helped and protected.

Children benefit from the refurbished home environment. All children now live on the ground floor and can move around freely. This enables them to spend time together and develop friendships. The home is equipped with resources to provide children with education and stimulation, and children's personal spaces are decorated according to their individual taste. This contributes towards a homely environment.

Children make progress, particularly with their self-care. One child is now able to brush their teeth independently, while another child can use the toilet without support. This helps children to enjoy their privacy and independence. Another child is increasing their mobility without the use of their wheelchair. This has enabled the child to have access to a greater number of experiences outside of the home, which has helped to enrich their world.

The children attend monthly meetings. Staff encourage the children to share their views through individual communication methods. One child is supported to write letters and use a post box to communicate with staff. This provides children with the opportunity to have their views heard and feel listened to.

All children receive suitable education. One child who had previously not accessed education is now supported well by staff to do so. Staff encourage children to learn outside of the classroom in a dedicated education resources room. Children are rewarded for all of their achievements. Certificates to celebrate these achievements are displayed throughout the home.

Children participate in a variety of activities. Staff create opportunities for children to take part in activities together and help with fundraising for local charities. This encourages children to contribute towards their local community. Staff take the children on holiday. This means children can have experiences they may not otherwise have. Staff take photos to capture memories of these important events for the children and include them in personalised memory books.

Children who move into and on from the home are supported well by staff. Staff and the manager advocate to ensure that moves are planned in line with a child's individual needs. They use social stories to help children prepare for change and reduce their anxieties. Staff arranged for one child's friend, who also lives in the home, to accompany the child to visit their new home. This provided both children with reassurance and support. Some children maintain contact with staff after they

have moved on from the home. This provides children with an additional support network.

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

Staff do not consistently follow the detailed risk assessments and care plans. For example, there was a delay in staff seeking medical attention for one child, which delayed their treatment for an infection. On another occasion, staff did not change a child's pad, meaning they were in soiled clothing for a lengthy period of time. This does not offer assurances to the manager, children's families and professionals that children are consistently and safely cared for.

One child's risk assessment does not detail the content of their deprivation of liberty order or the purpose for which it was issued. Furthermore, there was no copy of the court order on the child's file. Consequently, staff were unclear about what their responsibilities were in caring for the child. This does not assure the manager that staff are complying with the court order to keep the child safe.

One child's self-injurious behaviour was assessed under the category of 'physical aggression'. This language is blaming of the child and misrepresents the emotions experienced by them. This impacts on how staff respond to keep the child safe.

Records do not always accurately reflect when a child has been in distress. This means some staff may be unaware of incidents. This prevents staff from understanding a child's presenting behaviours and providing a consistent level of care. Despite managers raising this with staff in meetings, it continues to be a shortfall.

Staff rarely use physical intervention to manage children's behaviour. Holds are only used to help to keep children and others safe. However, it is unclear whether children are helped to understand that staff use such behaviour management methods to help them rather than punish them.

Managers take immediate action when allegations against staff are made. This keeps children safer and helps them to feel listened to. Appropriate safeguarding steps are taken that include disciplinary action when required.

Children attend all routine medical appointments. Staff advocate for reviews of children's medication to ensure that they only receive the treatment they require. This helps to prevent children from being over-medicated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The leadership and management of the home is inadequate. Managers are ineffective at prioritising and making improvements.

The manager's auditing and monitoring processes are not effective. The lack of oversight means that the manager is not able to identify practice issues and put support in place to address them with staff. For example, a social worker raised concerns about staff practice that the manager had not recognised. Despite this, there has been no action taken to strengthen management oversight. This prevents leaders and managers from being assured that action is being taken to address concerns about the standards of care that children receive.

Children are not cared for by suitably qualified staff, as only a small proportion of the team have achieved the required qualification. This is because leaders and managers do not have a strategy to recruit suitably experienced and skilled staff. Many staff members are employed through a sponsorship scheme, which lasts for a period of three years. This means that staff may not stay long enough to acquire the relevant qualification. Consequently, children are being cared for by staff who do not have the necessary skills and knowledge.

The manager does not have an effective escalation process in place to ensure that children's plans are progressed and important documents are on file. Staff make repeated representations to children's social workers and commissioners, but requests are rarely escalated further when there is no response to these requests. For one child, this meant that they moved into their adult home without a pathway plan. Another child remains living in the home despite managers informing the local authority in January 2024 that they did not feel able to keep the child safe. This lack of escalation causes significant delay for children and prevents them from being assured of suitable care.

Staff feel well supported. Supervision sessions are held regularly and by suitably experienced staff. Sessions are reflective in nature and aid the learning and development of staff.

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 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— 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 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)(iii)(v)(vi)(b)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	1 September 2024
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—	1 September 2024

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; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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; 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)(a)(b)(c)(f)(g)(i)(h))	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare;	1 October 2024

make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice; The conditions are— that the care is delivered by a person who— has the experience, knowledge and skills to deliver that care; and is under the supervision of a person who is appropriately skilled and qualified to supervise that care. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(ix) (3)(c)(i)(ii)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))	1 October 2024
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—	1 October 2024

if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff have access to all the legislative social care, education and health care documents that contribute towards a child's care. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	1 October 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2625941

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Active Young People Limited

Registered provider address: 1 Suffolk Way, Sevenoaks TN13 1YL

Responsible individual: Gemma Wilkinson

Registered manager: Stevie Daley

Inspectors

Julia Hagan, Social Care Inspector
Kerry Chater, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024

