

# 2690778

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care for up to six children in up to four buildings under one single registration. This forms a 'multi-building children's home'.

A multi-building children's home allows the provider, in agreement with the placing authority, to make child-centred decisions about where each child lives and to ensure that their individual needs are met under this one registration.

These homes offer short-term, intensive stays, lasting typically 17 weeks. One child lives in each home and is supported by two carers.

There is no registered manager in the home. An interim manager has applied to register.

### Inspection dates: 27 to 29 June 2023

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 31 January 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 31/01/2023      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

The homes are part of a cluster of four. At the time of the inspection, there was one child living in each of the homes.

Children living in the home receive high-quality care from staff who understand their needs and vulnerabilities. There is a stable staff team in place that provides children with security to help them progress. Inspectors observed relaxed and nurturing environments where the children flourish.

Children are welcomed sensitively and moves in and out are planned. Staff promote positive endings. Recently, the staff provided support to one child and his family to ensure that his move was as smooth as possible. One parent said, 'Staff were persistent in their approach and there was good communication.'

The home provides a homely space where children can personalise their rooms with artwork and photos. Staff spoke about the improvements to the decor that have made the home more welcoming. However, some aspects of the kitchen require attention. Some cupboards look tired and wallpaper on the stairway is worn. These cupboards and the wallpaper need to be replaced. The manager has a schedule of works in place to address this. A recommendation has been made.

Children are making progress with their health. For one child, this has been significant, given their starting point. This is because the manager and staff are proactive in making sure all children have access to the right healthcare support.

Staff promote education and children are well engaged. They are given a range of opportunities tailored to their needs and gain qualifications in life skills and animal care, as well as functional skills in maths and English. This gives children a good foundation for future learning.

Inspectors found good levels of regular consultation between staff and children. This provides the children with an opportunity to share their views, thoughts and feelings with a trusted adult. Staff know the children well and there are good-quality plans in place. However, the manager should ensure that all children have up-to-date local authority plans, including education, health and care plans. A recommendation has been made to address this.

Every effort is made to provide children with new experiences. There is a strong focus on outdoor pursuits. Children enjoy mountain biking, abseiling and canoeing. Furthermore, staff create scrapbooks and slide shows which give the children memories to take with them when they move on.

Children told inspectors they know how to make complaints and identified staff who can help them. The manager has completed work with staff on understanding the

differences in complaints, grumbles and allegations and what actions to take. Furthermore, staff actively promote the use of advocacy. This has supported a child to make a complaint.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Staff keep children safe. The children told the inspectors that they felt safe. One child said, 'The staff are more like family than carers.' Risk assessments are clear and regularly reviewed. Leaders and managers have worked hard completing sessions with staff to further understand risk. Overall, incidents are well managed. The manager makes good use of lessons learned sessions with staff to talk about incidents and where things can be improved. Good-quality direct-work sessions have been carried out to look at emerging topics and children have received support in how to stay safe when using the internet, understanding healthy relationships and substance misuse.

Restraint is rarely used in the home. Children learn how to use safe coping strategies. Children are helped to manage their feelings and frustrations by building trusting relationships with staff.

When children are absent without permission or go missing from the home, staff are proactive in their efforts to locate them by searching the local area. Detailed records are made. The manager ensures that an independent return home interview is conducted following any incidents of children going missing.

Recruitment practices are safe. The manager ensures that all necessary checks are completed before staff start work in the home. This helps reduce the risk of harm to children.

When allegations are made, leaders and managers ensure that appropriate action is taken to safeguard children. Staff are confident in their use of whistle-blowing procedures should a concern arise.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

There is a new manager in post who has submitted her application to be registered. She is ambitious and has a clear vision for the development of the home. The manager has made significant improvements to the monitoring and auditing systems. This provides good oversight of the home.

The manager knows the children very well, despite only being in post for a short time. She models positive practice to the staff team. Staff feel they have learned about their roles and responsibilities and can follow agreed approaches, with guidance from the manager.

The manager values the team and provides effective leadership. This positive and supportive environment means morale has improved and is good. The manager has

high expectations for staff in how they should provide individualised and consistent care for all the children.

There is strong partnership working with external professionals. This is a key strength of the home. One professional said, '[Name of child]'s progress has been amazing. They are engaging well with staff and services. Episodes of missing have also decreased.' As a result of this good partnership working, children are experiencing positive outcomes.

Leaders and managers have made improvements to supervision practice. Staff say they benefit from regular supervision and team meetings. Additionally, they are encouraged to be more reflective. Staff say they now understand the benefits and purpose of reflective work.

Staff are provided with a wide selection of training specific to children's needs. The manager has started to promote the use of research-informed practice with the use of guest speakers. This is helping staff enhance their knowledge and skills.

All previous requirements and recommendations have been met.

## **What does the children's home need to do to improve?**

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that they engage with the local authority to obtain all up-to-date and relevant children's plans, including children's education, health and care plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a suitable and well maintained environment that meets the needs of the children. This specifically relates to ensuring that the worn kitchen cupboards are replaced and the wallpaper on the stairway is replaced. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

### **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:** 2690778

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** A Wilderness Way Limited

**Responsible individual:** Kate Somerside

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspectors

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector  
Dawn Walker, Social Care Inspector

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