

2710057

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Limited

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 houses under a single registration. The home offers short-term intensive stays, typically lasting for 17 weeks in duration, for children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in November 2022. The registered manager left the post in August 2024. A new manager has recently been appointed. They have submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

Four children were living at the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 November 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 4 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/07/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are making exceptional progress from their starting points. Children's life chances are significantly improved because of the dedicated and consistent care they receive. The team supports children who have experienced some of the most complex and challenging circumstances to make positive and sustained changes to their lives.

Staff are adept at quickly developing supportive and trusting relationships with children. The depth of these relationships is key to helping children to have meaningful conversations about their experiences. Staff help children to develop feelings of self-worth. Children recognise the positive impact that the staff have on their lives. This has helped children to understand how to keep themselves safe.

One child described how the staff team look at the things that matter the most. Their parent explained how the staff are non-judgmental and have 'gone the extra mile' to support their child to make significant changes to enable them to return to their care. This involved a detailed transition plan, with staff making twice-weekly visits to the child's family home to support their care.

Children are fully engaged in their own care plans. The plans include genograms setting out who is important in children's lives. These demonstrate the significance of children's extended families and friends in creating their support networks for the future. Staff work hard to help children strengthen and rebuild their family connections to ensure that they have a network in place to support them as they progress to adulthood.

Children are encouraged to engage in education and to consider their aims for the future. The manager advocates for children, to support the development of their potential careers. The education offer provided by the home is complemented by regular educational activities. When children live at the home for longer periods of time, the manager works with external professionals to ensure that there is appropriate education provision in place.

Progress in children's physical and emotional health is significant. The staff team plans well for the children coming into their care to ensure that their health needs are well understood and staff are able to meet them. Staff work with health professionals to provide personalised, research-informed support to children who have experienced significant difficulties around substance addiction and bereavement. Children recognise the significant improvements they have been supported to make and how this will benefit them in the longer term.

Children engage in a wide variety of activities that support them to develop their confidence and self-esteem. This includes riskier activities such as skydiving, along with other opportunities they may not have experienced before, like camping in the wild. Staff also support children to express themselves through activities such as art, crafts

and cooking. Children share experiences with staff that help them to make important and lasting memories during their time together.

Children live in warm and homely surroundings which they personalise to reflect their own preferences and interests. Staff ensure that children feel welcomed into the home, with thoughtful touches that show consideration and care.

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

Staff understand the background to children's risk-taking behaviours. They are involved in developing robust plans that provide effective strategies to reduce risk. Staff apply these strategies in a therapeutic way to engage children positively and sustain positive improvements. Therefore, children feel valued and can thrive.

Children are well informed and educated about risk-taking behaviours. Professionals and parents say that children are kept safe and are well cared for. One parent said the care given to their child has helped to save their life. Children recognise the progress they have made and the feelings of safety they have been supported to develop. The manager has advocated for one child to live at the home longer term, in line with their wishes.

Incidents are managed extremely well. Records of incidents are detailed and are written in a child-friendly and focused way.

There are very few occasions when children go missing from the home. This is significantly different to children's experiences before moving into the home. When children do go missing, staff follow missing protocols. One professional explained how the strength of the unconditional relationships between the child and staff had mitigated risk in this area and had helped the child to learn self-value and to reflect on their actions.

There are very few incidents of physical intervention. When physical intervention is used, it is managed appropriately in line with protocol and is both necessary and proportionate.

Children are assisted to regularly share their views about the care they receive. Allegations and complaints made by children are taken seriously by managers, who include children in discussions to consider how to resolve issues. This helps children to feel that they are listened to and their views matter.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Managers are inspirational and ambitious for the children in their care. They know the children well and help the children to have positive experiences in the home. They are proactive in looking at creative ways to make improvements to children's lives by using research to provide a bespoke service that meets children's complex needs.

Managers recognise the strength and resilience of their team in being able to support the most vulnerable children to achieve positive outcomes. They lead by example and have a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. Exceptional feedback was provided by professionals and parents about the impact of the drive and determination of managers and staff in caring for children.

There have been some recent changes to the management team. Staff complimented managers on the confidence they give them and how well they take on board staff members' views.

The management team has exceptional relationships with staff and other professionals. Managers' ability to advocate for children is a real strength of the home and is evident in the way they proactively challenge other professionals to achieve better outcomes for children.

Management oversight of the home is strong. Detailed monitoring provides a full overview of the service and its strengths and weaknesses. Managers tackle any practice issues directly and sensitively, with the aim of ensuring that children receive the best care possible.

Team meetings take place regularly and provide a shared focus for the staff team to discuss children and how to meet their needs creatively. The staff team is empowered to consider creative ways to support children and to take responsibility for the care they provide.

Regular supervision and staff appraisals provide opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice. Targets are identified in appraisals, however, they are not specific, measurable or time bound. Appraisals do not give a fully rounded view of staff performance as they do not include feedback from colleagues and other professionals working with children or from children themselves.

Recruitment practices are robust and detailed to ensure that those working with children are safe to do so and are well equipped for their roles.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that annual appraisals of staff identify targets which are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound) and take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and of children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: 2710057

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Limited

Responsible individual: Jodie Rolph

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Andrea Foreman, Social Care Inspector
Julie Elder, Social Care Inspector

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