

2724911

Registered Provider: AP Care Homes Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home. The home provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted on 27 July 2023.

There has been no registered manager in post since 13 September 2023.

There were no children living in the home at the time of this visit.

Inspection date: 6 March 2024

This monitoring visit

This home was judged inadequate at a full inspection on 16 and 17 November 2023. Ofsted found that children had suffered harm, due to serious and widespread safeguarding failures. Since the home was judged inadequate, three monitoring visits have been conducted.

At a monitoring visit on 30 January 2024, Ofsted served a notice restricting accommodation at the home. This notice was issued with immediate effect, from 30 January to 22 April 2024.

Prior to this latest monitoring visit, the provider contacted Ofsted to report that they had taken sufficient action to address the serious shortfalls and that the grounds for restriction no longer applied. In line with procedure, Ofsted visited the home to monitor the notice restricting accommodation.

Since the last visit, the provider had taken action to report allegations made by a child to the local authority designated officer (LADO). The LADO requested that the responsible individual conduct an investigation into the allegations. Despite the

LADO providing direct guidance and support to the responsible individual and the manager, they failed to conduct an appropriate investigation.

Safer recruitment practice continues to be poor. Despite managers stating that they had addressed the shortfalls in recruitment practice, staff recruited since the last visit had not been recruited in line with safer recruitment processes. This continued poor and unsafe practice does not ensure that children will be cared for by adults who have been suitably vetted.

The leadership and management arrangements remain unstable. Since registration, there have been three responsible individuals and three managers, only one of whom was registered. The current manager has submitted an application to register with Ofsted on three occasions. However, each application has been returned as it was not a complete application.

There are insufficient staff to safely care for four children. Since the last visit, two members of staff have left and two new staff have been appointed. This raises concerns about the continuity of care for children as, since the home was registered, 14 members of staff have left the home.

Managers do not ensure that staff have the skills and experience to provide safe and effective care for children. Although staff have attended training, managers had not used their internal systems to evaluate the effectiveness of the training to improve care practices. Learning opportunities have been missed, to ensure that all staff know how to report allegations, follow safeguarding procedures and record physical interventions in line with statutory guidance. Managers acknowledged and accepted this continued shortfall.

Records of supervision practice do not demonstrate that managers provide all staff with individualised practice-related supervision to improve the quality of care for children. For example, two new staff's supervision records were duplicated, with only the name changed. This does not show that staff have individual time to talk about the care of children and the support systems in place. It is also a missed opportunity for new staff to discuss their learning and support needs.

Since the last visit, two independent monitoring reports have been submitted to Ofsted. Both reports are dated for visits in February 2024. The independent reports identified concerns for managers in safer recruitment processes, inadequate recording in physical intervention records and poor risk management practices. The managers have not used the information from the independent scrutiny of the home to ensure improvement of practice in these key areas.

The provider has failed to consider the way in which they appointed the independent person, to ensure impartiality in line with regulation.

The manager has submitted a review of quality of care report. However, the report did not focus on the experiences of children living in the home and the impact the care was having on outcomes and improvements for the children. The manager had also not sought the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities or staff when compiling this report.

Since the previous monitoring visit, managers had taken action to introduce documentation, but had not considered how these documents would enable them to monitor and review care practices to improve the quality and safety of care provided to children. The management team accepted the failings and stated that they do not believe that the restriction notice should be lifted.

Ofsted has raised additional requirements due to further breaches in regulation identified at this visit. Previous requirements are restated.

Inspectors were not satisfied that the provider had taken sufficient action to address the failings that led to the restriction notice being issued. The restriction remains in place.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/11/2023	Full	Inadequate

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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— 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 has sufficient staff to provide care for 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; 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)(c)(d)(f)(h)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff receive training that improves their skills and ability to meet children's needs. The registered person must have effective oversight of the quality of care provided to children so that they can identify and address areas of concern. This includes oversight of staff	21 April 2024

practice, records for children and training and supervision records for staff. This requirement is restated.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) This requirement is restated.	21 April 2024
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(a)(b))	21 April 2024

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff receive practice-based supervision which supports the development of good practice.	
The registered provider must appoint, at the registered provider's expense, a person ("the independent person") to visit and report on the children's home carried on by the registered provider. If the registered provider carries on more than one home, the registered provider may appoint the same person as the independent person for all or any of those homes. Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), the registered provider may not appoint the following as an independent person— a person who has, or has had, a connection with— the registered person; a person working at the home. (Regulation 43 (1) (2) (3)(g)(i)(ii))	21 April 2024
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b) (5))	21 April 2024
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and	21 April 2024

the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.

The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it.

The registered person must ensure that—

within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—

the name of the child;

details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;

the date, time and location of the use of the measure;

a description of the measure and its duration;

details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;

the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the

measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that records of physical intervention are completed in line with regulation, ensuring that these are reviewed and that any concerns in relation to restraint practice or injuries sustained are identified and responded to swiftly. This requirement is restated.	
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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(vii)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children’s risks are clearly assessed and that staff are provided with clear guidance and strategies to support them to manage and reduce risks. The registered person must ensure that staff take effective action to keep children safe. This includes ensuring that allegations made by children are promptly reported to relevant agencies to safeguard children. This requirement is restated.	12 March 2024

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; that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. They must ensure that they scrutinise the information available to them prior to a child moving in so that they effectively consider whether they can meet children’s needs. Further to this, the registered person must ensure that home care plans reflect the information and outcomes from the child’s relevant plans and that this informs good care practices in the home. This requirement is restated.	12 March 2024
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff—	12 March 2024

meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;

understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;

are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ix)(x))

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children's emotional and behavioural needs are understood and these are met, in line with the child's relevant plans.

This requirement is restated.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2724911

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: AP Care Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 307 Hale Road, Hale Barns, Altrincham WA15 8SS

Responsible individual: Daren Roberts

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Emma Thornton, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Catherine Fargin, Regulatory Inspection Manager

Michelle Edge, Senior His Majesty's Inspector (Quality Assurance Visit)

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