

2766726

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 operated by a private provider as a multi-building children's home and provides care for up to six children in four separate buildings.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in December 2023.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living at the home.

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 September 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is warm and welcoming. There are toys and photographs, including photographs of children with family members, in several rooms. This demonstrates that children's identities are valued and respected.

Children are welcomed to the home sensitively by staff who have a good understanding of them before they arrive. Children develop secure, trusting relationships with staff, who know them well. This gives children a sense of security and belonging.

Children know how to complain, and they are given details of advocacy services on arrival. When children do not want an advocate, their decision is regularly reviewed in case they have changed their minds and need an independent voice.

Children receive education in line with the home's statement of purpose. Some children are making progress, including successfully achieving GCSEs. The home's tutor has recognised that there are delays in children accessing exams in the short course of their placement, and is taking action to address this. However, plans for informal education are not consistent, which means children do not have structured daily routines for learning.

Children are in good health. Those who are reluctant to access general health services have done so with the support and encouragement of staff. There is a strong response when new children move into the home who smoke, resulting in children quitting smoking completely.

Children are supported to understand and manage their emotions and behaviours via open, honest discussion and clear boundaries.

Children are given an abundance of emotional warmth and verbal praise, which raises their confidence and self-esteem. This means that children are taking full advantage of new outdoor activities and learning new skills, including swimming and paddle boarding.

Children's family relationships are strongly promoted, and reunification is supported. One parent said, 'The manager took time to be there and support [name of child's] feelings about family. We are inseparable now.'

Children's local authority plans are not always received and, although action is taken by the manager, this is not consistent or tenacious.

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

Children say that they feel safe, and they are supported to identify risks, including sexism and radicalisation. Staff consistently challenge and educate children on behaviours that are detrimental to them and others.

Children do not frequently go missing from home, even when they arrive with a high risk of going missing. However, when children do go missing, staff take a proactive response to locating them in line with their individual protocols. Records of missing incidents are clear, and staff ensure that children have the opportunity to complete return home interviews.

Children's past experiences are understood from the point of referral. The manager sees beyond 'pen pictures' of children and ensures that staff understand that children's behaviours are an indicator of the trauma they have experienced.

Positive behaviour is promoted, and effective de-escalation techniques that are specific to individual children are used. This means that children are rarely held to keep them and others safe. When children are held, this is proportionate and the records are clear, with detailed debriefs and clear learning identified for staff.

Children understand the rules and boundaries about television and the internet when they move into the home. Children's internet access is limited, and the manager aspires for children to find alternative ways to spend their time. Staff understand the risks that the internet may pose for children, and they have strategies in place to keep children safe. However, the lack of professional curiosity about emerging risks online, leaves children at risk of harm.

Staff recruitment in the home is safe. Any concerns about staff practice are responded to promptly and appropriate action is taken in conjunction with the local authority designated officer.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager knows the home's strengths and areas for development. She has high expectations of staff, who share her vision and aspirations for children. As a result, there is a cohesive team working at the home.

The manager knows the children well. She is animated when discussing their progress and achievements. She is supported by an assistant manager. They have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. One parent said, '[Name of manager] makes the effort, and the kids know they are important to her. She is one of a kind.'

There are a small number of qualified staff, and the manager has good oversight of the progress staff are making in relation to gaining their qualification. Additional support is provided when necessary to ensure that staff make progress in achieving their qualification. Any issues relating to staff are responded to appropriately and action is

taken to ensure safe practice. However, the workforce development plan does not outline the procedures for performance management.

Leaders and managers have effective oversight of the home and the quality of care provided. The manager uses the feedback from the independent person to make the required improvement. The manager challenges the independent person when it is felt that their recommendations are not in children's best interests.

The manager has good oversight of the home. This helps her to review and improve the care and support provided to children and identify any training and development needs for staff and children.

Reflective supervision takes place regularly, which makes staff feel supported. Staff talk positively about their managers and feel able to raise any concerns with them. There are regular team meetings, which are an opportunity for staff to learn and reflect on children's needs and progress.

Leaders and managers make child-centred decisions about new children moving into the home. They ensure that staff have the skills to meet children's individual needs. If additional training is required to help staff to meet children's individual needs, this is promptly provided. This has included additional missing-from-home and deprivation of liberty training.

The culture of the home is characterised by high expectations and aspirations for all children. The ethos and objectives of the home are demonstrated in practice.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training, and employment. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children who are not attending education have a regular routine and education timetable and are consistently supported to complete educational activities.	30 September 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that relevant plans for all children are received. This includes any placement plan and any care plans. When these are not received, the registered person should escalate this. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 14, paragraph 3.1)
- The registered person should ensure that children are given the opportunity to share their views, wishes and feelings about their home and the care they receive, including all aspects of their care planning. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 22, paragraph 4.6)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan that can fulfil the workforce related requirements, including the staffing structure, the experience and qualifications of staff, and the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation, and any core training. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should continually assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Specifically, where children have access to mobile phones, there should be an understanding of the phone's settings to reduce risks of the location being shared. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 42, paragraph 9.5)

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: 2766726

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Limited

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

Responsible individual: Hannah Winn

Registered manager: Anna Noble

Inspectors

Sarah Jackson, Social Care Inspector
Stacey Ilaboya, Social Care Inspector

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