

2775677

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 within this single registration. The home offers short-term intensive stays, typically lasting for 17 weeks in duration for children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in February 2024.

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

Inspection dates: 23, 24 and 25 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

Children's moves in and out of the home are well planned and supported. One child, who will be moving out of the home soon, is spending time with their new carers. Staff have created a detailed memory book with funny anecdotes about the child's experiences at this home for them to keep. Another child received a bespoke welcome guide when they moved into the home, which recognised their interests and gave them useful information about who would be caring for them.

Children have developed positive and trusting relationships with staff despite their time at the home being short-term. Children can identify who they can talk to if they want to share their views, and they know how to make a complaint.

The education provision available for children is clear in the home's statement of purpose. Despite this, one social worker and a child's parent felt that this provision was too limited. Additional tutoring has been sought to increase the number of hours in education for some children. The members of the staff team ensure that children's daily activities are used as opportunities for informal learning.

One child's education, health and care plan is almost two years old. The manager has not escalated this effectively with education services in order to ensure that a review is carried out. This means the child's current needs and how they can be met are not well understood. The manager does not have an up-to-date personal education plan for another child.

Children's health needs are being met. Staff have ongoing discussions with one child to support them to understand the risks of smoking, and this is helping them to consider the impact on their health. The care team supports children's bedtime routines to improve sleep hygiene. One child, who has an allergy, attended bespoke training provided to staff in order to share their own perspective on their health needs.

Children benefit from regular sessions with a well-being practitioner, who finds creative ways to support and engage children. Information from the sessions provides insight for staff into how they can tailor their practice to meet children's individual needs. The practitioner produces a therapeutic formulation for each child which is reviewed monthly with staff to consider how the child can be best supported.

Children regularly take part in a wide range of activities. These are tailored to meet their interests and to support their well-being and include reading, crafts, boxing and going for walks. Staff encourage children to engage in clubs with other children to support their socialisation. However, not all children want to be involved.

Children personalise their bedrooms and the home if they wish to. One child has decorated the home ready for Halloween and their bedroom is being painted in their favourite colour.

Family members commend the members of the staff team on how supportive they are of family time, which includes staff travelling some distance to ensure that children spend time with people who are important to them.

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

Risks to children are understood by staff. There are effective strategies in place for staff to follow to reduce risks to children. Children's risks have reduced, and the staff team supports children to understand how to keep themselves safe. Meaningful discussions take place with children to support their understanding.

Children are in good routines. Managers understand the importance of consistency for children and support staff to provide and maintain this. Children benefit from visual aids around their home that help them to feel secure and reassured.

Children rarely go missing from the home. This was identified as a significant risk for one child before moving into the home. However, there have been no missing-from-care incidents since the child moved into the home. When children do go missing, staff use professional curiosity to understand why this has happened and the children's feelings.

Although there has been a high number of incidents of physical intervention for one child, this is fewer than in their previous home. Additionally, the frequency and duration of incidents have reduced. Debriefs are completed in a timely way with children and staff. Managers reflect on the themes and patterns of incidents to look at ways to support change.

Following some incidents, in two of the four houses, fire extinguishers were locked away in the staff office. There has been no consideration of the risks around this or any consultation with fire risk assessors. This leaves those living and working at the homes at risk in the event of a fire.

Risk assessments for two of the four houses do not consider the potential risks to children from the adjacent businesses. They do not demonstrate that managers have consulted with the business owners to mitigate risk. This leaves children at risk of harm if they were to enter these locations.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is due to be promoted to responsible individual for the home. At the time of this inspection, she was on annual leave and a new manager for the home had been appointed. The new manager is yet to make an application to register with Ofsted.

The new manager and deputy manager know the children well. They have high aspirations for what children can achieve and model positive behaviours to their team. The manager has well-established relationships with professionals and family members, who praised her for how well she communicates with them.

Staff feel well supported in their roles and say that their views are listened to. When areas for improvement are identified by the manager, these are addressed in supervisions and team meetings.

Team meetings are effective. They help staff to understand what is expected of them so they can provide children with consistent care. Meetings include regular agenda points which the members of the team discuss, including the independent visitor reports and the home's statement of purpose. This helps staff to understand how their roles fit into the overall running of the home and its aims and objectives. Supervision sessions take place regularly and provide opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice.

Some staff members have not completed the required training within expected timescales. This has been because of staff sickness and the need to prioritise children's care. The manager has arrangements in place to ensure that the training is completed. Bespoke training is provided when needed to ensure that children's specific individual needs are met.

Allegations made by children are taken seriously. The manager takes appropriate steps in response to any allegations to ensure that these are investigated appropriately. Children are usually informed of the outcome of any allegation investigations. However, a discussion with one child about the outcome of their allegation was not recorded until sometime after it took place.

The manager has good oversight of the home. She uses daily handovers and recording systems to ensure that key areas for improvement are highlighted to staff. Oversight of incidents is reflective. One incident was reviewed by a manager who had been involved in the intervention, meaning it was not completed fairly or independently.

Staff recruitment practices are thorough so as to ensure that those caring for children are safe to do so.

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; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement; raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(vi)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's education, health and care plans are reviewed annually.	31 October 2024
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1) (2)(a))	30 September 2024

In particular, the registered person must ensure that fire extinguishers are accessible and suitably located within the home.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny by an appropriate person who is independent of the incident in order to ensure that their use is fair. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The registered person should ensure that children's case records are recorded in a timely way. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the review of premises includes all known risks and any emerging risks. Specifically, this relates to the risks associated with adjacent commercial land and neighbouring farms. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)

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: 2775677

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Limited

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

Responsible individual: Simon Barton

Registered manager: Kathryn Seal

Inspectors

Andrea Foreman, Social Care Inspector
Carrie Mayes, Social Care Inspector

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