

2778885

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Ltd

Monitoring visit

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, for children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home was registered with Ofsted in January 2024, alongside the registered manager.

At the time of the inspection, there were no children living in the home.

Inspection date: 8 July 2025

This monitoring visit

This home was judged inadequate on 13 May 2025. Inspectors identified that managers had failed to adequately assess risk and poor staff practice had led to children being unnecessarily exposed to harm.

Following the inspection, compliance notices under Regulation 12 (the protection of children standard), Regulation 13 (the leadership and management standard), Regulation 14 (the care planning standard) and Regulation 40 (notification of a serious event) were issued.

A monitoring visit was carried out on 9 July 2025. The purpose of this visit was to review the action taken by the provider to meet the compliance notices.

Following the inadequate judgement, the provider developed an action plan to highlight the areas of concern in current practices and to identify opportunities for improvement. Although refresher safeguarding training was delivered to staff, it did not enable staff to gain a clear understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities in protecting children or identify the specific actions that they must take when a child is at risk of harm.

As part of the staff development programme, tailored workbooks were introduced to strengthen knowledge in areas such as safeguarding, managing allegations, going missing from care, and reporting and recording. However, a review showed that some staff had copied content from online sources, with several identical entries. These issues were not identified by managers, reflecting a missed opportunity for oversight and support. Despite good intentions, the exercise revealed ongoing gaps in staff's understanding of child protection responsibilities and failed to bring about meaningful improvements in practice.

Although immediate action was taken after the inspection to improve the knowledge and skills of the staff team, limited opportunities were provided for the registered manager to reflect on the concerns raised during the inspection, particularly those relating to weaknesses in his leadership and management. The missed opportunity to engage in meaningful reflection has prevented the registered manager from stepping back to assess his leadership critically. As a result, he has missed opportunities for personal growth and professional development to strengthen his leadership and manage the home effectively going forward.

Following the inspection, four children moved on from the home. Each move was reported to be positive, with transitions carefully planned. Staff were reported to have worked together to ensure that the children experienced a supportive ending to their time in the home. However, the registered manager confirmed that the records did not reflect all of the work completed. This was a missed opportunity to document the positive experience and support that staff provide to children.

Prior to children moving on from the home, several serious incidents occurred within the home. These incidents raised additional concerns regarding staff's safeguarding practices. Inadequate risk management contributed to one child going missing while visiting their local area. In another incident, a child gained access to online shopping platforms using a staff member's unattended laptop and was able to order vapes. Upon delivery of the parcel, staff failed to demonstrate professional curiosity and handed the package to the child without checking its contents. These actions do not reflect effective safeguarding practices, nor do they suggest that lessons have been learned from previous events.

On occasions, police intervention was needed due to incidents involving children going missing from care. Although staff were reported to have handled the situations appropriately, the incident records raised further concerns about the measures taken to safeguard the children. Leaders and the registered manager had not identified these gaps in documentation.

Notifications were submitted to the regulator following serious incidents. However, at times the registered manager reported that these were delayed due to internal auditing processes. The quality of the information provided was inconsistent and

sometimes lacked sufficient detail to show what actions had been taken to protect the children from harm. The registered manager acknowledged that this area of practice requires further improvement.

The environment, in some of the houses, has not been maintained to a good standard and does not fully reflect a nurturing and child-centred approach. The director responded promptly by initiating the necessary repairs and remedial actions.

The provider has made the decision to close the home. A cancellation of registration voluntary form was submitted.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/05/2025	Full	Inadequate
30/09/2024	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
*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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they complete a robust assessment of the child's care needs and risks and the ability of the staff team to meet these effectively.	8 August 2025
*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; help each child to understand how to keep safe;	8 August 2025

have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;

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;

that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm;

that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.
(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(d))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that:

risk assessments are detailed and up to date and that staff understand them. This includes ensuring that assessments around the activities for children consider the risks in the context of their background and previous behaviours;

children are supervised in line with their care needs and risk assessments. This includes staff carrying out the strategies to mitigate risk effectively;

arrangements for the management of keys and access to staff offices and sleep rooms are effective;

staff take effective action to remove items that present a risk to children or others;

the administration of medication is robust and well recorded, with any unnecessary medication being disposed of appropriately;

hazards around the home are made safe; and

fire extinguishers are stored in line with fire risk assessments.	
*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 work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and 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)(b)(c)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that: there is robust review of incidents involving input from other professionals, such as therapists or safeguarding leads, where appropriate; there is learning from incidents, with clear plans as to how this will be implemented and monitored;	8 August 2025

there are clear arrangements in place for the presence of leaders and managers in the home to ensure appropriate oversight and support.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e)) The registered person must ensure that all notifiable incidents are notified to His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) and done so without delay.	8 August 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming and supportive and seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, understanding that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met. Doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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: 2778885

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: A Wilderness Way Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Austin Gracie

Inspectors

Michelle Edge, Senior His Majesty's Inspector
Suzanne Birchall, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025