

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC474894
Inspector	Bill Drumm
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	A Wilderness Way Limited
Registered person address	Manor House Brisco Carlisle Cumbria CA4 0QS

Responsible individual	Clare Mary Agnes Houghton
Registered manager	Jacqueline Angelique McCann
Date of last inspection	N/A

Inspection date	22/09/2014
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	inadequate
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	inadequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	inadequate
-------------------	-------------------

Young people live in an environment where their standard of care is not good enough. The home does not have consistent management arrangements in place. Consequently, essential monitoring of how the home is run does not take place at regular intervals, staff are not formally supervised often enough, and young people's risk assessments and health plans are not kept up to date. Additionally, the home's Statement of Purpose does not fully reflect the skills, competencies and experience of the full staff team. In addition, the ethnic and cultural needs of young people are not fully considered in their care plans and the actions taken by staff to ensure young people retain their sense of identity are not clearly recorded. Staff do not clearly record and analyse the rewards and sanctions used within the home to help young people modify their behaviour. This means that initiatives that work well are not fully understood by all the staff team and used to best effect.

Young people are kept safe. Keyworkers have regular discussions with young people about their past life experiences, relationships with others and their behaviour. High staffing ratios, on-going vigilance and regular meetings with partner agencies such as the police helps to minimise the risk of young people going missing. This in turn helps to reduce the risk of them being exploited or abused.

An area identified for improvement relates to a written development plan for the

future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resources.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is provided by a private company and is registered to care for up to three young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there. In particular, this means ensuring each young person's risk assessment is both thorough and kept up to date (Regulation 11 (1)(a))	14/10/2014
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there. In particular, this mean ensuring each young person has a comprehensive health care plan in place (Regulation 11 (1)(a))	14/11/2014
7 (2001)	ensure the home has a registered manager in post (Regulation 7 (1))	31/10/2014
33 (2001)	ensure that an independent person is appointed to visit and report on the children's home in accordance with this regulation (Regulation 33 (1))	14/11/2014
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every 3 months (Regulation 34 (1)(a))	14/11/2014
27	ensure that all persons employed by him receive	14/11/2014

(2001)	appropriate training, supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27(4)(a))	
4 (2001)	compile in relation to the children's home a written statement of purpose which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 4 (1))	14/11/2014

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that all children receive personalised care that promotes all aspects of their individual identity (NMS 2.1)
- ensure that sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children (NMS 3.8)
- ensure that there is a written development plan in place, reviewed annually, for the future of the home (NMS 15.2)
- ensure that the result of all statutory reviews and reviews of placement plans are recorded on the child's file, and individuals responsible for pursuing actions at the home arising from reviews are clearly identified. (NMS 25.8)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

The overall health of young people has improved since they moved into the home and each young person has a health care plan in place. With staff support they are able to access the primary health care services they need to promote their health and well-being, such as doctors, dentists and opticians. Young people who require treatment are encouraged to attend all relevant appointments. Young people also have access to secondary health care services, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and smoking cessation advisors. However, individual health care plans do not clearly identify those young people who require these services or how they will be accessed. This means that the overall health care needs of individual young people are not clearly documented and access to secondary health care services may be delayed or overlooked.

Young people develop stable relationships with the staff team and learn how to relate to one another in a positive manner. One young person said, 'I'm as happy here as I can be.' Young people also enjoy a good, nutritious diet with alternatives available if they do not like the main meal on offer. For some, this is the first time they have consistently eaten nutritious and well-balanced meals. One member of staff said, 'we regularly ask what they want on the menu and once a week we try and have a takeaway night. We also encourage them to do some baking.'

Not all young people attend school. Some have completed their full-time education and are seeking college placements or work opportunities. Others are returning to school to learn new things, to consolidate on what they have already learned and to improve on their recent exam grades. Young people's motivation to succeed has generally improved since they came to live at the home. The progress they make from their starting points at the time of placement is acceptable and helps to improve their life chances.

Young people generally get on well together despite the occasional argument or disagreement. Relationships with staff were observed to be both positive and respectful. Young people are encouraged to participate in activities for daily living and to help around the home keeping things clean and tidy. One member of staff said, 'I try and make everything a learning experience for the young people. A trip to the shops or to the gym, are all learning opportunities from handling the money or knowing how to communicate properly with staff.' The support young people get helps them to develop socially acceptable behaviour and to make a successful transition into adulthood.

Staff understand the importance of family contact and, where appropriate, they facilitate and support it. Young people place a great value on the contact they have with friends and family members, although for some this can cause distress and

anxiety. Staff are generally aware of this and help young people to deal with their feelings in a constructive manner. Placing authorities have placed restrictions on the contact some young people have with their friends, relatives and family members for their own safety and well-being. Staff are able to adequately supervise contact which means they are able to keep young people safe.

Quality of care

adequate

Staff and young people are observed to have a positive, relaxed manner with each other. One member of staff said, 'Young people were a little nervous when they first arrived which is understandable. Some of them have now formed quite good relationships with certain staff and are beginning to trust them. They're beginning to talk openly with us and that can only be good in helping them with their problems.' The environment staff creates for young people is supportive and caring. This helps young people, if they choose, to make progress and move forward with their lives.

Each young person has a placement plan in place from their home authority that sets out what their needs are. The home also has its own care plans in place that are user friendly and easy to understand. Young people are involved in their own care planning and have the opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way. However, the home's care plan does not include an accurate and up to date risk assessment associated with the young person's behaviour, particularly with regard to internet safety and mobile phone use. Involving young people in their own care planning helps them to understand the progress they are making which in turn helps to improve their self-esteem. However, failing to include internet or mobile phone access in risk assessments compromises the safety of young people.

Keyworkers monitor the service provided to young people and engage them in discussions about the care they receive and the reasons why they have to live at the home. This helps staff to understand the thoughts and feelings of the young people, to understand their changing needs and ensures they feel listened to. As a consequence, there have been no complaints made at the home.

Young people have retained a strong identity and allegiance to their community of origin. This is particularly the case for those who are placed some distance from their home area. However, individual care plans for young people who originate from other areas of the country do not reflect their cultural needs or backgrounds. This could cause young people to feel isolated or alone.

Young people are supported, on a daily basis, to attend school or to pursue further education or employment opportunities. Staff actively promotes the benefits of attending school and in achieving good exam grades. Young people are encouraged to have high aspirations and to achieve their maximum potential. Attending school, college or employment will help them to do this, which in turn will help to increase their self-esteem and self-confidence.

Young people are supported to engage in a range of purposeful activities both within the local community and in the home such as, baking, trips to the cinema and visiting the local gym. This helps young people to develop new skills, improves their self-esteem and helps to prevent boredom.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people who come to live at the home are extremely vulnerable and have very complex needs. All are at risk of child sexual exploitation and have been involved in gang related incidents in their home area. Individual risk assessments associated with this type of behaviour are satisfactory. And, as far as possible, help to safeguard young people. Direct contact young people have with friends, relatives and family members, via the home's telephone and during face to face visits, is supervised. However, there are occasions when young people can contact others via social media that is not always supervised. The precise details of the home's location remain confidential. These measures help, as far as possible, to ensure young people remain safe and cannot be persuaded to take part in risk taking behaviour.

The home has rigorous systems, policies and procedures in place for staff to follow if young people go missing or are absent without authority. Staff work in partnership with local statutory agencies, particularly the police to ensure there is a free flow of information and that young people are kept safe and remain safe. Written records show that there have been no incidents of young people going missing since the home was registered earlier this year.

Staff encourage good behaviour by the use of praise and rewards. This approach helps young people to develop more self-control and learn more constructive ways of dealing with negative behaviour or stressful situations. However, staff do not analyse which rewards and incentives work better than others in encouraging young people to modify their behaviour. This means that the most effective methods may not be adopted by all staff. Restraint, or holding young people, has not taken place since the home was registered earlier this year.

The home's communal areas are very well decorated, furnished and maintained. Young people's bedrooms are homely and have been individualised by the young people themselves. This helps young people to feel comfortable and relaxed in their surroundings.

The home has only recently opened and all staff newly appointed. There are clear recruitment policies and procedures in place which have been followed. Written references received by the home in relation to prospective employees are checked verbally for their authenticity and any gaps in employment are discussed at the interview stage. These systems help to safeguard the welfare of young people.

Leadership and management

inadequate

The Registered Manager has been registered since April 2014. She does not have the appropriate qualifications to be the Registered Manager of a children's home. However, she is enrolled on the appropriate course of study. In addition, the Registered Manager has been absent from the workplace for several weeks. An application by an interim manager has not been received by Ofsted within the necessary timescales.

Staff training records show that all staff have received formal training in child protection. Training records also show that recently appointed staff have all completed a period of induction with the organisation and the home. In addition, all staff are qualified to NVQ level 3 in a relevant subject relating to the care of children.

The home's Statement of Purpose provides an accurate reflection of what the home does and what a placement there is meant to achieve for young people. However, the Statement of Purpose does not accurately describe the current staff team or what their skills, qualifications and experience are.

Staff do not receive regular support from managers through a process of formal supervision. Records indicate that supervision sessions do not take place on a regular basis. Staff do not therefore have their work practice monitored on a regular basis and they are not fully supported to deal with the complex issues associated with looking after young people effectively.

The home's manager does not have systems in place to ensure that the quality of care is regularly monitored. Problem areas which may be identified as a result of the internal monitoring process are not highlighted and appropriate action to address any shortcomings is not taken.

Additionally, monitoring visits from someone independent of the home do not take place every month. Visits from an independent person help to ensure that the home is run properly and that young people are well cared for.

The home's manager does not have a development plan for the home in place. This means that management and staff members do not know what the strengths and weaknesses of the home are and how continued improvement can be achieved.

Young people have their needs formally reviewed at regular and appropriate intervals by their placing authority. Written records of these reviews are not available within the home. Those responsible for carrying out specific actions, and in what timescale, are not known. This means that the changing needs of young people may not be met in a timely fashion.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.