

1233899

Registered provider: Active Ark Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children or young people, irrespective of gender, who have social and/or emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 July 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account inadequate

How well children and young people are helped and protected inadequate

The effectiveness of leaders and managers inadequate

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 14 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/03/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
06/09/2017	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(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, 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
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(i))</p>	03/09/2018
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))</p>	03/09/2018
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p>	03/09/2018

<p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received;</p> <p>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)(f)(g)(ii) and (h))*</p>	
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))</p>	03/09/2018
<p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p>	03/09/2018

<p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))*</p>	
<p>A person may only manage a children's home if—</p> <p>the person is of integrity and good character;</p> <p>having regard to the size of the home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children—</p> <p>the person has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills to manage the home effectively and lead the care of children; and</p> <p>the person is physically and mentally fit to manage the home; and</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the person in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 28 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the manager making application to Ofsted in order that the manager's suitability can be assessed.</p>	<p>03/09/2018</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>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—</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p>	<p>03/09/2018</p>

<p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>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")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>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 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii) and (c))</p> <p>This relates both to records of restraints and sanctions.</p>	
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>This relates specifically to ensuring that there is a comprehensive record of incidents where children go missing from the home.</p>	03/09/2018
<p>The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))</p>	03/09/2018
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)((b)(e))*</p>	03/09/2018
<p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p>	03/09/2018

<p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and</p> <p>to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2)(a)(b))</p>	
<p>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.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and</p> <p>make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.</p> <p>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)(c)(3)(4)(a)(b) and (5))</p>	<p>03/09/2018</p>

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- First aid boxes should be provided and maintained. In particular, the availability of a ligature knife should be included as part of the essential supplies in at least one box. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.13)
- Any individual appointed to carry out a visit to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Poor leadership and management of the home, including inadequate management of risk, have significantly contributed to this home's inadequate judgement.

Young people have moved into the home with a clear assessment of their compatibility with other young people living in the home. However, young people's progress has declined since the interim inspection on 14 March 2018. They are less settled, and staff have found their behaviours to be more challenging and concerning. Consequently, one young person has moved from the home to safeguard the interests of both young people.

Although staff try hard to motivate and encourage regular school attendance, their efforts have not been as successful as found at the last interim inspection. Young people's attendance has declined significantly. This is the result of periods when young people have been missing from the home and occasions when they have refused to attend. The attendance of one young person is now less than 85% compared to almost 100% during the previous term.

Young people have good access to a wide range of activities, including local youth centres and army cadets. This promotes their social and emotional development.

Staff support young people well to understand their rights. Young people have good access to local advocacy services and use these effectively. Young people know how to complain if they have concerns about the home or staff. However, when complaints are made, these are not comprehensively recorded. The documents do not identify action taken nor whether the complaints have been satisfactorily resolved.

One placing authority has voiced a lack of confidence in the home. Incidents have been

identified when staff have not adhered to the young person's care plan. Consequently, the authority's professionals feel undermined and concerned that the young person's safety is compromised.

Staff show genuine concern for young people's health needs. They are proactive in seeking support from a range of professionals including child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), which have promoted young people's physical, psychological and emotional well-being.

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

Young people are vulnerable, and their behaviours place them at risk of harm. A significant increase was found in the number of incidents when young people have been missing from home. Ofsted was not previously notified of most of these incidents and some were of several days duration, which is of concern. They do not always evidence that plans are followed or make clear that return home interviews have been undertaken.

Inconsistencies in the content of young people's individual risk assessments particularly fail to clearly identify their increased vulnerability to child sexual exploitation while missing from the home. Overall, the quality of young people's written risk assessments is open to misinterpretation and does not provide clarity for either staff or managers.

Although seldom used, sanction and physical restraint records were found to be insufficiently detailed and fail to meet the required standard. Young people's missing from home records are also poorly recorded. This means that it is difficult for the reader to be clear about the action taken and what follow up support was provided on the young person's return.

Staff and managers were unclear whether recent training, concerning suicide and self-harm, took specific account of the use of ligatures. In discussion with the inspector, it was highlighted that the inclusion of a ligature knife with first aid resources would be a valuable addition in safeguarding young people who may self-harm or attempt suicide in this manner.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The current manager has been in post since November 2017 but has not yet made application to Ofsted to become the home's registered manager. This fact alone requires the effectiveness of leaders and managers to be judged inadequate.

Case recording is poor. There is an absence of the required documentation on the individual case files, such as local authority care plans and personal education plans. This means that staff do not have all the required information on young people to inform their practice and to support the young people.

The home's statement of purpose has not been recently updated despite changes in

staff and working arrangements. This fails to provide a clear understanding of what the home can offer and how it delivers its services.

Requirements and recommendations made at the interim inspection have not all been successfully met. This inspection also identified a number of occasions when the manager failed to notify Ofsted when it was appropriate to do so. This has diminished transparency between the home and Ofsted, hindering Ofsted's ability to reasonably monitor the home between inspections.

Internal and external monitoring arrangements are poor. They fail to demonstrate rigorous scrutiny of the home and consequently do not contribute to the home's development. Additionally, the manager has not completed a quality of care review and reported this to Ofsted as required. Managers are not familiar with the home's strengths and weaknesses and therefore improvements expected by Ofsted have not been made. Three requirements are repeated as a result of this inspection and, in addition, three compliance notices are served to improve the overall effectiveness in leadership and management of this home.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1233899

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Active Ark Limited

Registered provider address: Armstrong Watson, Birbeck House, Duke Street,
Penrith CA11 7NA

Responsible individual: Louise Matthews

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Gillian Walters, social care inspector

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