

# 2724911

Registered provide: AP Care Homes Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this children's home**

This is a privately owned children's home. The home provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted on 27 July 2023. There is no registered manager in post.

There were no children living in the home at the time of the visit. Since the last monitoring visit, one child has moved in and out of the home.

**Inspection date:** 30 January 2024

## **This monitoring visit**

This home was judged as inadequate at a full inspection on 16 and 17 November 2023. Ofsted found that children had suffered harm, and due to serious and widespread safeguarding failures, issued a notice suspending the registration of the home with immediate effect, from 17 November 2023 to 8 February 2024. The period of suspension required the provider to cease operating until leaders and managers could demonstrate that the risk of harm was eliminated.

A monitoring visit was carried out to monitor the suspension notice on 3 January 2024. It was determined that the provider had taken sufficient steps to address the safeguarding failings that led to the suspension. The notice suspending the registration of the home was therefore lifted with immediate effect.

This monitoring visit was carried out due to concerns that children's rights to privacy could be compromised.

At this visit, it was evident that leaders and managers had not taken proactive steps to ensure that the privacy of children is appropriately protected. The responsible individual and manager had not considered how media interest could affect children's privacy and had not implemented any safeguarding measures to reduce the known risks. However, leaders and managers identified the actions they would now take to address this.

Since the previous monitoring visit, one child has moved into the home. The child lived at the home for one week before immediate notice was served by the provider due to concerns that leaders, managers and staff could not safeguard the child. This resulted in the child moving out of the home in a poor and unplanned way. This did not ensure that the child had a positive ending to their time in the home.

The leadership and management arrangements do not provide stability in the home. There has been no registered manager in post since 13 September 2023. The new manager has not submitted a full application to register with Ofsted. The new responsible individual said that, since starting employment on 2 January 2024, he has spent one day a week at the home. This has impacted on the effectiveness and stability of the leadership and management arrangements. Given the previous weaknesses and progress needed, Ofsted is not reassured that the current management arrangements are effective.

Safeguarding practice does not promote the safety and welfare of children. Despite the staff attending training to enhance their skills and knowledge they do not demonstrate this learning in practice. Recent safeguarding incidents have been poorly managed, and police assistance has been requested to manage the child's behaviour and keep them safe. Furthermore, managers and staff have not notified relevant people, including the placing local authority and Ofsted, of serious incidents. This prevents robust multi-agency oversight and management of safeguarding incidents.

Physical intervention practice is poor. Managers report that physical intervention has been used to hold a child on more than one occasion. However, physical intervention is not recorded to demonstrate that staff have taken proportionate and appropriate action to keep a child safe. The local authority reports that a child made an allegation following a physical intervention that they had suffered bruising and a knee injury, which required hospital attendance.

Allegations are not appropriately responded to. The child made two allegations when living at the home. Managers and staff did not report these allegations. This did not enable other safeguarding professionals to take appropriate action or ensure that all safeguarding processes were followed to keep the child safe.

There is no clear direction or strategies for staff to follow when a child presents in crisis. In addition, when new risks emerge, such as concerns around fire setting, leaders and managers do not provide staff with clear guidance to enable them to

respond to and reduce these risks to safeguard the child.

Safer recruitment checks are not sufficiently robust. There is a lack of consideration for when staff have previously worked in a position involving children and the reason why their employment ended. This potentially impacts on the safe care of children.

Risk management plans do not include all known risks for a child, despite risks being clearly identified in the local authority documentation. The placing authority confirmed that as part of a planned move to the home, all relevant information, including safeguarding concerns and risks, was shared. However, this information was not considered by managers when developing plans to safeguard the child.

Care planning in relation to the child is poor. Leaders and managers do not carefully assess the child's needs before they move into the home to determine whether staff have the skills and experience to safely care for the child.

Monitoring of the home is ineffective as potential risks are not identified and addressed. Managers have not identified weaknesses in practice, such as those found by the inspectors. External monitoring systems do not support the provider to address shortfalls in practice. Ofsted has not received an independent report since November 2023.

The statement of purpose has not been updated or provided to the regulator with the details of the staff and their qualifications. Leaders and managers have failed to address weaknesses that were previously identified. Requirements to meet regulations are restated.

It is Ofsted's view that it is unsafe to admit any other children to the home while this level of risk, ineffective leadership and poor management oversight continue. If children were admitted to the home, the risks would be exacerbated. As a result, Ofsted has issued a notice restricting accommodation at the home. This notice was issued with immediate effect.

Ofsted will carry out further visits to the home to monitor the restriction notice and the provider's response to addressing the serious shortfalls identified at this monitoring visit.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/11/2023	Full	Inadequate

## 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<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;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(vii))</p> <p>Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that children’s risks are clearly assessed. Also, they should ensure that staff are provided with clear guidance and strategies to support them to reduce risks.</p> <p>Leaders and managers must ensure that staff take effective action to keep children safe. This includes ensuring that allegations made by children are promptly reported to relevant agencies to safeguard children.</p> <p>This requirement is restated due to further shortfalls identified.</p>	<p>12 March 2024</p>

<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> <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>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for 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>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)(d)(f)(h))</p> <p>Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that staff apply their training in practice to ensure that children receive good-quality and safe care in line with their needs.</p> <p>Leaders and managers must also have effective oversight of the quality of care provided to children so that they can identify and address areas of concern. This includes ensuring that records are completed to allow leaders and managers to scrutinise staff practice and identify and address any areas for improvement.</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p>	<p>12 March 2024</p>
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.</p>	<p>12 March 2024</p>

<p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home,</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual is of integrity and good character;</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p>	
<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>protect and promote each child's welfare;</p>	<p>12 March 2024</p>

<p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(ii)(iv))</p> <p>This relates specifically to ensuring that the care provided to children is personalised and meets children's individual needs and vulnerabilities.</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</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 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;</p> <p>that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that children have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. They must ensure that they scrutinise the information available to them before a child moves in so that they can effectively consider whether they can meet the children's needs.</p> <p>Further to this, leaders and managers must ensure that home care plans reflect the information and outcomes from the child's relevant plans and that this informs good care practices in the home.</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p>	<p>12 March 2024</p>
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—</p>	<p>12 March 2024</p>



how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and

the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.

The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it.

The registered person must ensure that—

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—

the name of the child;

details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;

the date, time and location of the use of the measure;

a description of the measure and its duration;

details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;

the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;

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")—

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

<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 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii) (viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that records of physical intervention are completed in line with regulation, ensuring that these are reviewed and that any concerns with physical intervention practice or injuries sustained are identified and responded to swiftly.</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p>	
<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;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(c)(e))</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p>	12 March 2024
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans;</p>	12 March 2024

<p>understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;</p> <p>are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ix)(x))</p> <p>Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that children’s emotional and behavioural needs are understood and met in line with the child’s relevant plans.</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p>	
<p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children’s home a statement (“the statement of purpose”) which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b))</p> <p>This relates specifically to ensuring that details of staff qualifications and experience are included in the statement of purpose and that this is updated and shared with Ofsted.</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p>	12 March 2024
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children’s home at least once each month.</p> <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <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</p>	12 March 2024

and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.

The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—

children are effectively safeguarded; and

the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.

The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to—

HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b) (7)(a))

## 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:** 2724911

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** AP Care Homes Limited

**Registered provider address:** 307 Hale Road, Hale Barns, Altrincham WA15 8SS

**Responsible individual:** Daren Roberts

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## **Inspectors**

Emma Thornton, Social Care Compliance Inspector

Catherine Fargin, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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