

2724911

Registered Provider: 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 has been no registered manager in post since 13 September 2023.

There were no children living in the home at the time of this visit.

Inspection date: 17 April 2024

This monitoring visit

The home was judged inadequate at the full inspection in November 2023. Ofsted found that children had suffered harm due to serious and widespread safeguarding failures.

Since the home was judged inadequate, four monitoring visits have been conducted. The provider has failed to make and sustain the necessary improvements or act in accordance with the relevant regulations. A restriction notice was served following a monitoring visit on 30 January 2024.

Further visits have been undertaken to monitor this restriction. During these visits, inspectors identified ongoing weaknesses relating to safeguarding practices and a continued lack of stability and effectiveness in the leadership team.

There are ongoing concerns about the skills and knowledge of the leadership team and its ability to make sufficient changes to help children aspire to fulfil their potential and promote their welfare. There has been no registered manager in post since 13 September 2023. Since the last monitoring visit, there have been further changes to the management structure and leadership of the home. The manager

who started in January 2024 left with immediate effect in March 2024. The continued changes in the leadership team do not demonstrate stability.

The provider does not demonstrate an understanding of the requirement to recruit suitable people to key management positions to safely operate and manage the home. This does not provide assurance that the home will be led and managed in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose.

Safer recruitment practice continues to be weak and unsafe. Despite ongoing concerns in this area, the provider has not developed safer recruitment processes and practices to demonstrate that they understand their roles and responsibilities in this key area of practice. These shortfalls place children at risk of potential harm.

Leaders and managers have reviewed their monitoring systems. However, the current monitoring and review systems do not demonstrate that these will support managers to make continuous improvements in the quality of care. This does not assure Ofsted that the current leadership team will provide safe and effective care for children.

Staff have had access to training. However, despite a training system being in place, leaders and managers had not identified further shortfalls in training or fully evaluated the effectiveness of training for each staff member. This ongoing weakness does not demonstrate that all staff will have the skills and knowledge to meet the children's needs and keep them safe.

In previous monitoring visits, the deputy manager, who has taken on the role as the new manager, provided information about a child's move into the home and identified that the placing authority failed to provide sufficient key information. This led to the provider making a formal complaint against the placing authority and immediate notice being served. However, during this visit, the new manager confirmed that all information had been provided by the local authority. However, a detailed analysis had not been completed by leaders and managers to ensure that staff understood the needs of the child and could safely care for them. This was contradictory to previous information given by the provider. As a result of poor care planning, the child did not have a positive stay at the home and moved out after seven days.

Following this visit, Ofsted raised additional requirements due to further breaches in regulation. Previous requirements are restated as sufficient action has not been taken to demonstrate that they are met. Ofsted issued a further notice restricting accommodation at the home.

It is Ofsted's view that it is unsafe for any other children to move into the home while this level of risk and ineffective leadership continues. Should further children be admitted to the home, the risks, as highlighted in this notice, would be exacerbated.

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 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; and</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, the registered person must ensure that staff receive training that improves their skills and ability to meet the children’s needs.</p> <p>The registered person must have effective oversight of the quality of care provided to children so that they can identify and address areas of concern. This includes oversight of staff</p>	<p>31 May 2024</p>

<p>practice, records for children, and training and supervision records for staff.</p> <p>This requirement is repeated.</p>	
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.</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 repeated.</p>	<p>31 May 2024</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; and</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it.</p>	<p>21 April 2024</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) (5))</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p>	
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—</p> <p>how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children’s home; and</p> <p>the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.</p> <p>The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it.</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>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>12 March 2024</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 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that records of physical intervention are completed in line with regulation, ensuring that these are reviewed and that any concerns in relation to restraint practice or injuries sustained are identified and responded to swiftly.</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p>	
<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>12 March 2024</p>

<p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children’s risks are clearly assessed and that staff are provided with clear guidance and strategies to support them to manage and reduce risks.</p> <p>The registered person 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.</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; and</p> <p>that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person 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 consider whether they can meet the child’s needs effectively.</p> <p>Further to this, the registered person 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>	12 March 2024
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p>	12 March 2024

mutual respect and trust;

an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and

positive responses to other children and adults.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

that staff—

meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans;

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; and

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))

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children’s emotional and behavioural needs are understood and met, in line with the child’s relevant plans.

This requirement is restated.

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, Regulatory Inspection Manager

Catherine Fargin, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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