

2508513

Registered provider: Cumbria County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned and run by a local authority. The home provides short-break accommodation for children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The service has two main functions. The first is to provide short-term intensive outreach work within the community. The second is to provide short-break care.

The home can accommodate up to six children or young people on a short break. Currently, 12 children and young people access the short-break service.

The home registered with Ofsted on 22 January 2019 but did not become operational as a short-break home until March 2019. The manager, who is also qualified and registered for another home of this type, has been in post and registered since that date.

Inspection dates: 13 to 16 September 2019

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not applicable. This is the home's first inspection since it was registered with Ofsted in January 2019.

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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
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 effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii)) This relates specifically to the effectiveness of sanctions.	30/11/2019

Recommendations

- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that particular time and any areas of high risk to the children that the home is designed to care for, such as missing or exploitation. There is no expectation that the registered person will review the home against every part of the quality standards every six months - registered persons should use their professional judgement to decide what factors to focus on. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next 6 months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

As well as being a short-break home, this purpose-built property also serves as a venue for meetings and family group conferences. Although well-furnished and comfortable, the home is somewhat clinical and lacks a homely feel. However, children and young people are being encouraged to develop their own artwork to give the home some character and to make it homelier.

Children using this short-break service are identified as being at risk of being taken into local authority care. They say they like coming here and that they look forward to their visits. They are familiar with staff, some of whom are already involved in outreach work with them in the community. Staff are warm and welcoming on their arrival and children and young people respond positively, enjoying the good relationships they share with staff and their peers.

Short-break planning is well organised. Staff work together with children and young people, their parents and social workers to ensure that children and young people receive the support and care they require during their short breaks at this home. Planned weekend breaks complement the outreach support that the team provides, enabling staff to have a valuable opportunity to get to know children and young people better.

Staff are nurturing and encourage children and young people to explore their talents and interests during short breaks at this home. Organised trips provide children and young people with fun and good structured opportunities to socialise with others in their age group. Consequently, through activities, children and young people develop greater confidence and self-esteem.

Children and young people's lives improve as a direct result of the consistent care they receive from staff through the combined approach of outreach and short-break care. Success is measured by children and young people's individual achievements. For example, for one, this meant a return to education after a considerable period of non-attendance. For another, this meant a return home to the safe care of a parent following weeks of sofa surfing with friends.

With the opening of this home, staff have greater flexibility to provide targeted support. In particular, the location of this home has made it more accessible to many children and young people whose safety, emotional health and well-being would be seriously compromised without this type of intervention.

Parents speak positively of the home and the quality of service that staff provide. One parent commented, 'Things have certainly improved. She is back home; has been for four months. There is less self-harm and fewer physical outburst[s]. We are getting along a lot better as a family. When this comes to an end, [staff name] will be sadly missed by the whole family.'

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

Children and young people feel they are safe at this home and protected by staff. The good quality of the relationships shared with staff clearly reflects their confidence that they are treated with dignity and respect. The trust children and young people have in staff is evident and those spoken to were in no doubt that staff listen to them and take their views and wishes into consideration.

Staff understand the complex nature and range of difficulties that children and young people experience. These include the breakdown of family relationships, involvement in criminality, substance misuse and the vulnerability to exploitation. Staff identify the quality of their relationships and their ability to work creatively as fundamental in achieving good outcomes for children and young people. This allows children and young people to build trust in staff and to feel able to share their worries and concerns.

Staff educate children and young people to understand the dangers of their personal risk-taking behaviours, their vulnerability and how they can keep themselves safe. Support is extended to their families, often in terms of establishing positive routines and boundaries, to ensure that they have the knowledge and skill to maintain their safety and well-being in the community. Consequently, children and young people become more self-aware, resilient and increasingly safe.

Staff have not experienced any incidents of children or young people going missing from the home. However, they are fully conversant with the local protocol and procedures to deal appropriately with any incidents should they occur.

Staff encourage children and young people's positive behaviour by making the home a fun and comfortable place to stay, with plenty of activities that they can enjoy. Children and young people are expected to follow some general house rules, including keeping to bedtimes and helping at mealtimes. Poor behaviour is challenged and on occasions consequences are applied when considered appropriate. There have not been any occasions when staff found it necessary to use physical intervention.

Records are kept of those occasions when consequences have been deemed appropriate. Their content confirms the measure to be proportionate and relevant to the behaviour described. However, records do not routinely consider the effectiveness of the consequence applied. This is key to informing and reviewing behaviour planning and management.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is effectively led by an experienced registered manager, who is supported by two assistant managers who manage this home on a day-to-day basis. The manager has responsibility for a similar short-break home, also managed with the support of another two assistant managers. She successfully divides her time between the two homes to ensure that both run smoothly and provide the care and support children and young people require. This arrangement so far appears to be working well.

The registered manager was not present during this inspection. However, both assistant managers were confident in their knowledge and management of the home. Both were able to identify the home's strengths and weaknesses and how they could influence planning to ensure continuous improvement of the home.

Managers identified the diversity of the team as a real strength in working with children, young people and their families. Having a staff team with a good age and gender

balance means that the team has a good breadth of knowledge, skill and experience to successfully care for and support children, young people and their families.

Staff feel well supported in their roles and say they enjoy the work they do. Regular professional supervision, frequent team meetings and good access to the local authority's training opportunities ensure that staff have excellent opportunities for support and for promoting their personal development.

Internal and external monitoring systems are robust. This regular scrutiny informs the development planning and secures the continuous improvement of the home. Ofsted is provided with regular monitoring reports, which contain any recommendations made by the independent person. Any recommendations made are usually dealt with promptly and effectively to maintain the good standard of care offered by this home.

The home is yet to provide Ofsted with its first six-monthly quality of care review report. Managers spoken to during this inspection confirmed that they had no previous experience of producing such a report. However, guidance is available to assist with this task.

Children and young people's information is safely stored within the home to promote their privacy and to ensure that their confidentiality is maintained. Records are sufficiently detailed and well organised to provide a good overview of their plans, activity and achievements during their short-break stays at 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: 2508513

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Cumbria House, 107–117 Botchergate, Carlisle, Cumberland CA1 1RZ

Responsible individual: Lynn Berryman

Registered manager: Bernice Allport

Inspector

Gillian Walters: social care inspector

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