

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. It is registered to provide care for up to six children and is part of the local authority's Edge of Care service. At the time of the inspection, the home was providing both emergency and planned short-break and short-term care for children. Two children were in the home at the time of the inspection and one child spoke to the inspector about their experiences in the home.

The registered manager post is currently vacant. A manager has been appointed and is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 July 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 21 July 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/07/2021	Full	Good
13/09/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Outcomes for children are mixed. Most children make some progress when staying in the home. However, this progress is often limited due to the different care packages that the home currently offers to children. On occasions when children stay longer term, other children are not able to access their planned stays. This adds additional pressures to fraught family dynamics as, although the team continues to provide outreach support, they have limited resources to keep children and their families together.

Children who stay in the home longer term have often experienced several placement moves. Their needs differ from the needs of children who access the service on a respite basis, and they often display complex and challenging behaviours.

Decision-making around children coming into the home is not always clear. Children's plans do not consider how staff can safely manage the needs of children coming into the home alongside the needs of children already there.

Staff care about children. Children are welcomed into the home and are supported to develop positive, trusting relationships with staff, who understand their individual needs. One social worker said, 'For [name of child] they have really got him. They understand his needs. He feels like no one has listened to him before, but they listen to him here and they care.'

Children are provided with opportunities to engage in a wide range of activities. This helps to widen their social networks and positively impacts on their self-esteem.

The team works closely with children's families to strengthen and repair relationships, enabling some children to stay with their families and promoting stronger family relationships that remain available to children into adulthood. Some children have been supported to successfully return to live with their families and the team continues to provide them with ongoing support as required.

The home is welcoming and suitably furnished. The layout of the home suits short-term care but is not a homely environment for children staying longer term. The lack of personalisation in the home prevents children from developing a sense of belonging. Despite ongoing efforts to repair damage in the home, some doors and a carpet are awaiting repair.

Internal communal doors are routinely locked at night. This restricts children's movement around the home and has not been risk assessed. The manager is taking action to review the purpose and use of locks on all internal communal doors.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children say they like staying in the home and feel safe. They are helped to develop strategies to understand and regulate their emotions. Staff encourage them to make safer choices in the home and community.

Professionals and parents are highly complimentary about the level of care and communication provided by the team. One parent told the inspector, 'They keep him safe the best they can, and they definitely care about him.'

Staff understand children's individual needs. However, children's plans are not sufficiently robust. They are regularly reviewed but strategies for staff to follow to keep children safe are unclear and plans have not been updated to reflect children's current risks.

Staff work closely with other professionals to support children to reduce complex, challenging and high-risk behaviours. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in challenging and high-risk behaviours for children living in the home. When incidents do occur, the core staff team knows how to respond but records do not contain sufficient detail and there is limited oversight from managers. Opportunities to reflect and learn from incidents have been missed.

Behaviour management strategies used in the home are not robust. The practice of locking communal doors to manage the environment when a child becomes dysregulated has not been fully risk assessed and does not consider the needs of or impact on other children in the home. In this situation, children's choices to move around the home are determined by another child's needs. This impacts on the experiences of all children living in the home and is potentially detrimental to the group dynamics.

There have been several incidents of the police having been called to manage behaviours in the home. This is not only distressing for children but has the potential for children to be criminalised. Some incidents had not been reported to Ofsted as required by regulation. This limits the regulator's oversight of incidents in the home.

Sanctions for negative behaviours are rarely used. However, changes to the recording system mean any sanctions used are not being recorded consistently and there is limited oversight from managers.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home is currently without a registered manager. A manager has recently been appointed. He holds the relevant qualification and is in the process of submitting his application for registration. The manager was previously the deputy manager in the

home. He knows the home and service well. He is supported by two deputy managers.

Staff like working in the home. They recognise the improvements the manager is introducing and say that morale is high. Staff benefit from access to regular supervision and their performance is reviewed annually. A new training programme is being rolled out to address gaps in staff training. Most staff have not completed relevant drug and alcohol training despite substance use being a known risk for some children.

A number of recording shortfalls were identified during the inspection. These shortfalls limit the managers' abilities to review incidents and identify potential learning to improve practice in the home.

Managers do not make effective use of internal monitoring systems, meaning areas for improvement are not always identified or addressed. The new manager has identified a process to improve internal monitoring systems, but this has not yet been implemented.

Shortfalls in staffing have meant that, at times, children have been cared for by staff from the authority's other homes, who do not know them well. As a result, some children have experienced inconsistent care which has negatively impacted on their behaviour.

The requirement and recommendation made at the last inspection have been met.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— 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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(b) This specifically relates to ensuring that children's plans clearly reflect their current risks and the strategies for staff to follow to keep children safe; that staff remain vigilant to potential risks and understand their role in following children's plans and responding to children's individual behaviours, and that staff are appropriately trained to meet the needs of children, in particular, that they have completed drug and alcohol awareness training.	20 September 2022
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare.	20 September 2022

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(c)(e)(h)) This specifically relates to ensuring that incidents and practice in the home are overseen and evaluated by the manager; that children’s records are maintained to a high standard and that there is a consistent workforce providing continuity of care to each child.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— 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. that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and	20 September 2022

plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)) This specifically relates to ensuring that decision-making relating to children being accommodated in the home takes into consideration whether the child's assessed needs can be met in the home and the impact of that placement on other children living in the home.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	20 September 2022
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. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. 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"). The registered person must—	20 September 2022

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.
(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home's environment is personalised and maintained to a high standard throughout. In addition, they should review the presence and use of locks on internal communal doors. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour maximise the opportunity for children to reflect and learn and are clearly recorded, with oversight from the manager. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: Cumbria County Council

Registered provider address: Cumbria House, 117 Botchergate, Carlisle CA1 1RD

Responsible individual: Lynn Berryman

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Caroline Bertram, Social Care Inspector

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