

2508513

Registered provider: Cumbria County Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and run by a local authority. It is part of the local authority's edge of care service and is registered to provide care for up to six children. At the time of the inspection, there had been significant damage to the home. The organisation has taken steps to ensure that no children will be living in the home until the damage has been repaired.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2022.

Inspection date: 30 November 2022

Date of last inspection: 18 July 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We identified the following serious concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection:

- The home is not currently a safe or comfortable place for children to live.
- There has been significant damage to internal fire doors in the home.
- Restrictive measures to secure windows mean that some windows cannot be opened safely.

The care of children

Staff care about children. They develop positive relationships and support children to make progress. However, changes to the function of the home to provide care for one child have limited the work staff have been able to do with children and their families. It has also impacted on children who were not able to access planned stays in the home.

The team is resilient. They provided consistent, nurturing care to a child who was in crisis and who was displaying complex, aggressive and challenging behaviours. The decision was made for the child to remain in the home on a short-term basis due to the existing relationships he had with the staff team. However, it was quickly identified by all professionals that it was not a suitable placement for him. Staff were not able to reduce the risks he was exposed to in the community or consistently engage him in services to access education or healthcare.

The team worked closely with other professionals to support the child until an alternative placement could be identified. However, increasing concerns about the child's safety and well-being led to him being made subject to a deprivation of liberty order when he was living in the home. Adaptations were made to the home and staffing levels to accommodate the restrictive conditions of the order. Despite staff's efforts, they were not able to consistently meet the child's needs or keep him safe. The child has recently moved out of the home. Due to an escalation in his behaviours, staff were not able to support the child to move on in a planned way.

The home has been subject to significant damage throughout and requires repair and redecoration to ensure that it is a safe and welcoming place for children. There has been significant damage to fire doors and door frames. Restrictive measures to secure some windows mean that they cannot be opened safely. Managers are taking action to ensure that repairs are carried out. Replacement fire doors have been ordered and repairs to the windows and walls have been requested. Once repairs have been completed, there are plans for the home to be redecorated. Damaged furniture is due to be replaced but some recently installed window coverings are a potential hazard and need to be made safe.

Processes for children moving into the home have improved since Ofsted last visited in July 2022. However, as no children have moved into the home since the changes have been implemented, their impact is necessarily limited at present.

The safety of children

Practice in the home is underpinned by a strong safeguarding culture. Staff understand and are vigilant to the risks and vulnerabilities children may be exposed to. They communicate effectively with other services to promote a coordinated safeguarding response. Managers recognise that the home is not currently a safe place for children to live and have taken appropriate action to ensure that no children move into the home until repairs have been completed.

The child who was living in the home was vulnerable to exploitation. Staff were proactive in working with other professionals to minimise the complex safeguarding risks he was exposed to. They took appropriate action to respond to incidents when the child was missing from the home.

On occasion, staff had to manage situations that made them feel very unsafe and vulnerable. Due to concerns about high levels of aggression, additional agency staff who had been specially trained in crisis intervention worked alongside core staff in the home. The agency staff had a different relationship with the child and at times became the target of his aggression. This was something that the manager kept under review.

There has been a high number of incidents of staff holding the child to keep him and others safe. Incident reports are detailed but do not clearly reflect who spoke with the child following times when he was held. This limits the manager's oversight of incidents in the home.

Despite high staffing levels, police were sometimes called to manage the child's behaviours. This was distressing and had the potential for the child to be criminalised. Managers took swift action to review these incidents and ensured that any learning was used to develop practice in the home.

Risk and behaviour management plans are detailed and clearly reflect children's risks and vulnerabilities. They include strategies for staff to follow to keep children safe. However, at times, safeguarding incidents occurred when opportunities to provide adequate levels of supervision or identify potential risks were missed.

As a result of practice changes, consequences implemented as a response to negative behaviours provide opportunities for children to reflect and learn from their behaviours.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The manager has recently registered with Ofsted. He is supported by two deputy managers and a service manager. They have a clear vision for the home. The

manager has been working with other managers from across the wider organisation to develop the service.

Changes to internal monitoring processes ensure that the manager has clear oversight of practice and incidents in the home. However, the impact of these changes is currently limited as they have only recently been implemented. Managers ensure that incidents are reported to Ofsted as required by regulation.

The staff team has been significantly affected by the recent challenges experienced in the home. The use of agency staff, brought in as a safety measure to work alongside the core staff team, added to the complex dynamics in the home. Morale was impacted and some staff have made the decision to seek alternative employment. This is something that managers are taking action to address and there has been recent team building and development days to refocus the team. Staff have also been offered access to additional supervision, counselling and occupational health services to support them moving forward.

The quality of care review is still within the time frame for completion, which means that the requirement set at the previous inspection could not be measured and has been restated.

One requirement and one recommendation made at the previous inspection have been met. Four requirements have not been met and have been restated. A recommendation regarding the condition of the home has not been met and a requirement has now been set.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/07/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/07/2021	Full	Good
13/09/2019	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
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's homes overall aims and outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— treat each child with dignity and respect; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need on order to live their comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(iii)(vii)(c)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that all damage to the home is repaired, that window fittings and furniture are free from hazards and that the home is decorated and furnished to a high standard throughout.	10 February 2023
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	10 February 2023

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; staff remain vigilant to potential risks and understand their role in following children’s plans and responding to children’s individual behaviours. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
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. 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;	10 February 2023

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)(f)(h)) This specifically relates to ensuring that: incidents and practice in the home are overseen and evaluated by the manager; children's records are maintained to a high standard; there is a consistent workforce providing continuity of care to each child. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
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 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) (2)(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.	10 February 2023

This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
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— 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)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	10 February 2023
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (1) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that all the fire doors and windows are compliant with regulations.	10 February 2023

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2508513

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cumbria County Council

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

Responsible individual: Lynn Berryman

Registered manager: Dean McGregor

Inspector

Caroline Bertram, Social Care Inspector

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