

2574119

Registered provider: Cumbria County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is managed by the local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to four children, irrespective of gender.

The current manager was registered with Ofsted in February 2021. The manager is suitably qualified and experienced for this role.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

This is the home's first full inspection since registration.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2021

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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

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

Children said that they are happy living in this home, and were found to be making progress. Unfortunately, a lack of sufficient staffing in the home has had a negative effect on children's experiences. Shortfalls found in relation to safeguarding have meant that children are not consistently receiving good help and protection.

Children have access to formal education which suits their individual needs. Children are encouraged and incentivised to attend and engage. This helps them to achieve and maintain positive daily routines.

Children's health needs are being met. One child has received support from specialist nurses in managing an ongoing health condition. As a result, this child is benefiting from improved physical health. Furthermore, therapists and counsellors frequently attend the home. This means that children have access to professionals who can support them with their emotional and mental health needs.

Children's plans outline goals for independence and self-care from an early age. Children who are older are helped and encouraged to use public transport and to shop and cook for themselves. Plans for independence are reviewed in line with the changing needs of each child. This helps children learn valuable skills for later life.

Children are involved in setting their own monthly targets and goals. Progress towards these goals is incentivised. Because of this, children are regularly achieving and meeting targets. This provides children with a sense of achievement, encourages self-esteem and promotes confidence.

Insufficient staffing levels in the home have meant that children have witnessed, and have been actively involved in, incidents involving other children in the home. For example, one child has witnessed another child being restrained, which has upset them. This has the potential to cause children distress and has had a direct effect on children's relationships with each other.

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

Risk assessments are regularly updated. They are individualised to children and accurately reflect risks posed to children's safety. Assessments that consider the effect of children moving into the home are detailed. Risks are identified and mitigated effectively prior to children moving into the home. This helps to prevent incidents and maintain children's safety.

Incidents when children have to be physically held are used appropriately and proportionately to ensure the children's and staff's safety. Children who have been

held were spoken to as part of the inspection. They understood why they were held, and they had been given the opportunity to discuss the incidents. This helps children to understand their behaviours, and provides them with the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and feelings.

Staff did not respond appropriately to an incident in which a child was missing from home. On this occasion, there were increased concerns for the child's emotional well-being safety. This delay compromised the child's health and well-being.

Two incidents have occurred in which staff have failed to effectively respond to the emotional and mental health needs of children. On one occasion, a child had said that they had attempted to harm themselves, no immediate or timely action was taken to respond to concerns for the child's safety and welfare. Furthermore, this information was not appropriately documented or shared by the member of staff with the managers or relevant professionals.

During the second incident, a child indicated that they had taken an excess of paracetamol at the same time as leaving the home. Contact was made with mental health professionals to seek advice and guidance however no timely action was taken by those in the home to escalate concerns for the child's emotional well-being or safety. On both occasions, children have not been in receipt of good help and protection.

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

There are insufficient staffing levels to meet the needs of the children currently living in the home. Following a child being discharged from hospital, it was necessary for police to return him to the home. Staff were not able to collect him due to the needs and required monitoring levels of other children living in the home. On this occasion, the child did not receive the nurturing care and support from staff that he required and deserves.

Incident records viewed as part of the inspection demonstrated that staff have not received adequate support when necessary. On some occasions, there has not been a manager assigned to on-call duties. On other occasions, staff have not been able to get through to a manager to gain advice and guidance. Furthermore, staff who have been ill have not been able to leave the home to attend to their own health needs. When this happened, the staff remained on shift even though they had only had a minimal amount of sleep. A lack of support and availability of staff and on-call managers has negatively affected the management of children's behaviours.

The registered manager identifies and addresses poor practice. Robust investigations are completed when required. Staff are challenged when their practice is not up to the correct standard, and are also provided with adequate support.

Children's feelings are regarded as important. Staff and managers actively seek children's views and opinions, and act upon them. Complaints are clearly

documented, investigated and quickly resolved. As a result, children feel cared for and listened to.

Leaders and managers working in the home are committed to delivering quality care. They care about children and want to increase the levels of support and protection provided.

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— 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 each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(b)) Specifically, ensure that children have adequate support from staff to prevent them from witnessing, and becoming actively involved in, incidents in which other children are in crisis.	1 December 2021
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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;	1 December 2021

understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) Specifically, ensure that staff respond appropriately to incidents in which children may be at risk of harm. Staff should be fully aware of the procedures in place for managing incidents where children are at risk of harm.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d)(e)(f)) Specifically, ensure that there are sufficient staff to meet the safety, emotional and day-to-day needs of children living in the home. Provide children with consistent messages and continuity of care by ensuring that there is a stable and consistent team in place.	1 December 2021

The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, maintain clear and accurate records relating to children. Ensure that records are signed, dated and updated where required.	1 December 2021
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that each child's day-to-day health and well-being needs are met. Staff should work to make the children's home an environment that supports children's physical, mental and emotional health. Children should have clean, safe and homely bedrooms in which to sleep and spend time. When children do not maintain their own environments, staff should monitor and maintain these regularly. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)
- The registered person should ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour, and the staff in the home should be skilled in supporting the child to understand this and carry it out. Ensure that any sanctions used are routinely evaluated to monitor and assess their effectiveness. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 47, 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: 2574119

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: John Crotty

Inspector

Natalie Bennett, Social Care Inspector

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