

2617662

Registered provider: Cumbria County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by the local authority and is registered to provide care for up to four children who may have experienced social and/or emotional difficulties. The statement of purpose details the age range of children as being from 12 to 17 years.

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

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 September 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/09/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are happy living in the home. They are supported to develop trusting and positive relationships with the staff team. The home is well decorated. Staff at the home are welcoming and nurturing.

Children take part in a range of activities inside and outside of the home. The home has a variety of activities that suit most children's interests. One child, who aspires to participate in elite sports, is being supported to continue playing with their sports team despite this being a significant distance from the home. These experiences help children to build positive memories and develop their social skills and interactions.

Children understand how to make a complaint and there is a clear process in place where concerns are addressed and responded to appropriately. This positive response ensures that children feel listened to and that their views are valued. The requirement made in this area at the last inspection has been met.

Children's time with family and friends is supported and encouraged in line with their plans. Efforts are made to ensure that children feel comfortable to invite their family and friends to the home. However, children's activities are not documented sufficiently to capture their memories of their time living in the home.

Staff understand the importance of promoting children's health needs. The administration of prescribed medication is well organised. Swift action has been taken to address a recent error. Although no child was harmed, learning from the incident has led to changes across all homes operated by the local authority.

Children's school attendance is varied. When children refuse to attend school or are awaiting a school placement, they are supported by a peripatetic education worker. However, plans and routines when children are not attending an education provision are not robust. Staff are not aware of a child's alternative education plan, and another child does not have a clear routine or sleep pattern to support a successful return to a school environment. This limits children's educational opportunities.

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

Children say they feel safe. The staff understand the individual needs of the children in their care. They provide consistent and clear boundaries, which enables children to feel safe and cared for. Individual risk and support plans are detailed and provide clear strategies for how to reduce and minimise risks. Incidents of children going missing from the home have reduced significantly.

All staff have completed relevant safeguarding training. One member of staff is the local authority lead on therapeutic crisis intervention techniques. Their input means that the team is better equipped to support children with regulating their emotions.

Safeguarding matters are shared with appropriate agencies and are managed in accordance with statutory guidance. The team has effective links with relevant safeguarding agencies to keep children safe. Staff carry out direct work with children and are vigilant to risks in the community and online.

Safer recruitment practices are in place to ensure that robust checks are carried out. This ensures that all staff are suitably vetted and risks are minimised.

Health and safety procedures in the home are robust, clearly monitored and up to date. However, damaged furniture and an ongoing issue with the drainage and exposed pipes in a child's en-suite bathroom have not been repaired in a timely manner. Additionally, opportunities to support children with cleaning their bedrooms have been missed. Action has been taken by the manager to address these issues.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has submitted her application to register with Ofsted and holds the relevant qualification. She was previously the deputy manager and knows the children and the staff well. The manager is enthusiastic and ambitious. The staff are happy and enjoy their work. The staff are positive about the manager and describe her management as 'supportive' and 'nurturing'.

The manager uses external monitoring systems and the independent visitor reports well. She acts on the recommendations promptly and shares findings with the staff team. There are gaps in respect of the manager's internal monitoring processes. This reduces management oversight and limits opportunities for continuous improvements in the home.

Regular team meetings are held which allow the staff to discuss and reflect on their practice and the progress children make. However, staff appraisals, supervision sessions and the recording of supervision sessions are not consistent across the team. This shortfall reduces the opportunities for staff to individually reflect and develop their practice.

Most of the children's records viewed demonstrate how each child has progressed and reflect their journey well. However, some records are not helpful in the way that language is recorded, and consideration should be given to a child viewing these records now or at a later stage in life.

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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that issues with drainage and waste pipes are addressed swiftly and that children's bedrooms are kept clean and free from hazards.	15 March 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff are supervised in line with the organisation's supervision policy and that all staff receive an appraisal at least annually.	15 March 2023
The education standard is that children are supported to make measurable progress towards achieving their education potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—	15 March 2023

that staff—

help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support through the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(viii))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's daily routines encourage and promote their engagement in education.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information in a non-stigmatising way that is helpful to the child. Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff recognise the importance of recording children's journeys when they spend time inside and outside of the home. Having clear child-friendly memories is important for children to feel cared for and to cherish later in life. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.14)

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: 2617662

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Lynn Berryman

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Colin Jones, Social Care Inspector

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