

2681477

Registered provider: Cumbria County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority home that is registered to provide short breaks for up to six children who may have learning disabilities, physical disabilities and sensory impairment.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2022.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 January 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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not previously inspected		

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This service is currently providing short breaks for 28 children. The number of overnight stays is different for each child and is dependent on their individual needs. Staff plan the children's care well so that the time they spend in the home is individualised and meaningful.

Transitions are child focused and take place at a child's pace. Staff meticulously plan for when a new child starts to use the service through meetings with the child's parents, attending meetings to gather information, observations at school and teatime visits.

Staff support children by knowing and understanding their preferred communication system. For example, some children communicate using pictorial signs, some use Makaton, and some children have their own method of communication. Staff get to know the children's views, wishes and feelings and help them to understand what is happening in their day. As a result, children make good progress, settle well and like staying in the home.

Parents, children and professionals are fully inclusive in identifying the individual needs of a child and the care that the child receives. Targets identified in the child's education, health and care plan are built on in school, at home and at the children's home. A parent said, 'We all work together, and his progress has been remarkable.' In addition, there is a clear link between children's care plans and the work that staff are doing with children to meet their needs. This approach to care planning has resulted in sustained improvements to the lives of children who have complex and challenging needs.

Children are acquiring new skills and experiences because of the care that they receive. Staff are proactive in encouraging the children to take part in activities during their stay at the home. This includes trips to the beach, shopping centres, play areas, funfairs and the cinema. Staff document the activities that the children enjoy. There are many photos in the home of the children trying different activities.

Staff know the children exceptionally well. Children love coming into the home, and feedback from parents is consistently positive about the level of care provided by the staff. One parent said, '[Name of child] only comes here twice a month but it has made a big difference. His socialising has improved, and he now helps to look after his own personal care.' Another parent commented, '[Name of child] loves going here, and the staff are brilliant.'

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

Children are safe in the home due to a high level of staffing and the shared knowledge about children's individual needs. Staff have a good understanding of

children's individual risks and vulnerabilities, and there is clear written guidance for staff to follow to minimise any known risks.

Children do not go missing from this home. Staff are clear about what actions to take should a child go missing. Staff know the children well and work with them effectively in line with children's behaviour plans, which identify individual triggers and the best strategies for staff to use. As a result, no child has been restrained since the home opened. This demonstrates the staff's skills at de-escalation and managing challenging behaviour.

There have been no allegations or complaints made since the home registered, and staff know what action to take should any safeguarding concerns arise. Staff have a good understanding of the vulnerability of children who have a disability and work creatively with children to equip them with the skills that they need to keep themselves safe. For example, there are pictorial symbols in the home of the fire procedures, the complaints system, personal care routines and whether children are happy or sad.

Staff receive training in areas of safeguarding, such as around child exploitation, radicalisation and safeguarding protocols for children with disabilities. Parents are confident in the team's ability to keep their children safe and say that staff will respond to any incidents and keep them well informed.

Most children have additional medical needs, such as epilepsy and feeding stomas. Staff work closely with parents and health professionals so that they can give the assistance that children need. The staff receive bespoke training in all medical areas. Therefore, they are skilled at performing these tasks to a high standard. Likewise, children's medication is robustly given and monitored. Medical equipment, such as electrical hoists, is routinely checked and maintained. This means that children can be safely moved around the home.

All visitors are required to sign in and out of the home. Visitors' identification badges are checked, and visitors are supervised around the home. This further protects the children.

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

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2022 and is suitably qualified for the role. An experienced and knowledgeable assistant manager supports the registered manager well. They have an excellent understanding of the progress that children make and of the children's future needs. They continue to look at ways to improve the experiences of the children who access the service.

There is a stable, committed and enthusiastic staff team. All staff have a recognised childcare qualification, and they receive regular training in a wealth of areas. Therefore, staff have the relevant skills and experience to meet the complex needs of the children they care for.

Staff receive regular supervision and appraisals, which are reflective and linked to their practice. This not only ensures professional development but also ensures that the home is meeting its aims and objectives as set out in the statement of purpose. As a result, staff report that they feel supported in their roles. They say that managers are approachable and freely give advice and guidance. However, the manager does not routinely use research in practice to enhance the staff's knowledge. In addition, the manager does not have a workforce development plan that details the support given to staff, what the supervision, induction and probation timescales are and how poor performance would be addressed.

A key strength of the team is effective communication between staff, parents and professionals. This ensures consistency for the children across all areas of their lives.

The manager and staff are not aware of the local offer which sets out the support available for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is a missed opportunity to access additional resources for children.

External and internal monitoring do not meet regulation as visits have not taken place monthly from an independent person, and several reports have not been sent to the regulator. The manager's review of the quality of care has also not been completed within the regulatory time frame. This reduces the regulator's oversight of the home.

At the home's registration visit, a condition was made to make the outdoor soft-play area safe for children to play in. This has not been completed. This area is still sectioned off as the asphalt has holes in it. Therefore, not all areas of the home are accessible to the children.

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, the 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 home's overall aims and the 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— 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)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the play area is safe and accessible to children.	31 March 2023
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— demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—	31 March 2023

research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(g)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that research is used to underpin practice.	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. If the independent person becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest (whether under regulation 43(3) or otherwise) after a visit to the home, the independent person must include in the independent person's report— details of the conflict of interest; and	31 March 2023

the reasons why the independent person did not notify the registered provider of the conflict of interest before the visit.

The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to—

HMCI;

upon request, the local authority for the area in which the home is located;

the placing authorities of children;

the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager; and

the responsible individual (if one is nominated).
(Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5) (6)(a)(b) (7)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that visits take place monthly and that reports are sent to the regulator.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that managers and staff are aware of the local offer which sets out the support available for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.4)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which fulfils the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should make the best use of information from independent and internal monitoring. In particular, ensure that the review of the quality of care report is sent to the regulator within the required time frame. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: 2681477

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Daniel Barton

Registered manager: Frank Tripp

Inspector

Pam Nuckley, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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