

2729821

Registered provider: Cumberland Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to six children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. The home was once an edge of care provider for short-term care but now offers longer-term care.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home.

This home and manager registered with Ofsted on 1 April 2023.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 July 2025

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: 11 June 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/06/2024	Full	Good
18/01/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are developing positive relationships with staff. They can identify staff they trust and say that they feel listened to. This helps children to engage in meaningful discussions with staff when considering their decisions and making plans for their future. Children and family members are positive about the progress children are making and the support given by the team.

Children's moves into and out of the home have not always been planned due to the emergency nature of some of the moves. Staff have worked hard to help children move on from the home in a positive way.

Children's engagement in education is varied. All children are making progress from their starting points. Staff take opportunities to engage children in activities that support their learning in an interactive way. This makes learning more enjoyable for children.

Children's health needs are well met. Staff support children in attending general health appointments. This has helped to address health issues that had not been considered for some time. Staff encourage children to engage with support around issues affecting them, such as sexual health and vaping.

Children and staff benefit from the input of emotional health and well-being practitioners. Practitioners use therapeutic approaches to help staff understand children's experiences and care needs. Children work directly with practitioners to make sense of their experiences, and their work is set out in files that children keep.

The registered manager is considering plans to make the building more homely. A self-contained part of the building was being used by the placing authority for an emergency placement, managed separately and staffed by an agency. Staff accessed the children's home to use their restroom. This meant that children experienced strangers frequently entering their home.

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

Staff have meaningful discussions with children about the concerns they have for them. This helps children to consider their actions and make safer choices. Records of discussions are detailed and child focused, and they recognise children's progress.

Some children with complex needs have moved into the home on an emergency basis with little notice. There have been challenges for the team in supporting children with complex trauma and mental health issues. The manager has been proactive in ensuring that children's needs are better understood by professionals. Children with specific needs that could not be met by the team have moved to more suitable settings. The team has reflected well on children's experiences and identified areas for learning.

The registered manager uses impact risk assessments to consider the potential risks between any children who might move into the home with those already living there. This has led to the registered manager not progressing some referrals. He has been able to provide a clear rationale for his decisions, which focus on children's needs.

Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. However, risk assessments lack detail around strategies to help reduce risk. Supplementary safety plans also lack clarity. This means that staff do not always have the most up-to-date information when managing children's risks.

Staff take appropriate actions to keep children safe. They work well with other professionals to support children's needs. However, some records of incidents do not clearly explain the rationale for staff decision-making in areas where they are expected to use their professional judgement.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager advocates well for children. He knows the children well and has developed positive relationships with them. The registered manager has challenged placing authorities and leaders effectively regarding the decisions made for children.

There are some challenges for the team around staff vacancies and sickness. Despite this, staff feel well supported in their roles, and there is a positive team spirit, with staff demonstrating their resilience and proactive approach.

The team gathers for regular team meetings and development days. This enables the team to discuss specific issues and focus on key areas for reflection and learning. Records show that staff can express their views openly.

Staff training is up to date. Specific training has also been sought from external providers to ensure that staff are knowledgeable about children's specific needs.

Staff supervision takes place regularly. Records of discussions are brief and show that sessions do not provide consistent opportunities for individual reflection. However, group supervision also takes place. Sessions provide opportunities for the staff to reflect as a team. They include support from the emotional health and well-being team to help develop the team's therapeutic approach.

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— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; 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)(c)(i)(ii)) Specifically, this relates to ensuring that the home is not used by individuals who are not involved in the direct care of the children.	31 August 2025
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;	31 August 2025

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)(b))

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that risk reduction measures and strategies used by the staff are clearly documented in children's risk management plans.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information relating to incidents involving children in a careful, objective and clear manner. This should include an explanation of the rationale for decision-making around actions to keep children safe. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that supervision supports staff in reflecting on their practice and the needs of the children in their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: 2729821

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Curtis

Registered manager: Dean McGregor

Inspector

Andrea Foreman, Social Care Inspector

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