

2730932

Registered provider: Westmorland and Furness Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to six children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in April 2023.

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

Inspection date: 15 April 2025

This monitoring visit

An assurance visit took place on 4 March 2025 in response to a safeguarding notification in February 2025 when a child lit a fire inside the home. The inspector identified serious and widespread concerns in relation to safeguarding practices and ineffective leadership and management arrangements.

Following the inspection, two compliance notices were issued under Section 22A of the Care Standards Act. Compliance notices were issued under regulation 12, the protection of children standard and regulation 13, the leadership and management standard.

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the actions taken by the provider in meeting the steps in the compliance notices. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

Staff supported two children who were living in the home previously to have positive, planned moves out of the home. One of these moves has removed the risk posed by a harmful relationship between children living together in the home.

Further work has been carried out with children to support them to share their views and feelings about the harmful relationship they witnessed in the home. This is being completed at a pace to meet children's individual needs. The children's key workers have access to child-friendly resources to support these discussions, which are ongoing.

The manager has completed a full debrief with a member of staff whose practice did not safeguard children. The staff member has undertaken further training as part of an action plan to address the concerns around practice. A position of trust referral was made to the local authority designated officer (LADO), who was satisfied with the actions taken. The LADO will attend a service team meeting planned for June to ensure that all staff are aware of their role and responsibilities.

The manager has used supervision with staff to address the areas of concern and to support staff to reflect on their practice. Records from staff meetings demonstrate that staff reflect on their practice and how to support each other as a team. Since the last inspection, staff have had training in respect of completing searches of children's bedrooms to ensure that they are safe. However, the training did not consider the potential impact of searches not being completed in a timely way. All staff are now trained in fire awareness and as fire wardens.

The manager has made improvements to records. For example, the safeguarding incident form has been improved to ensure that it is clear and that staff know what agencies to contact. The manager has spoken to relevant professionals, such as the police and fire brigade, to improve staff safeguarding practices.

Records for one child do not show what attempts have been made to offer medication in line with how it has been prescribed. This does not show how staff have supported the child with their health needs.

Since the last inspection, there have been no safeguarding incidents. As a result, some of the improvements in relation to processes are yet to be tested.

A revised impact risk assessment is being trialled across the local authority's homes. This assessment is already used when managers consider children's moves into the home. This will also be reviewed when children live in the home to ensure that managers and staff consistently review the suitability and appropriateness of the dynamic between children. This is designed to support discussions and decision-making with senior managers in the local authority.

Leaders and managers met with senior managers in the local authority to discuss their concerns around delays with decision-making for children which put them at increased risk of harm. A further meeting is planned to develop a formal escalation process to ensure that managers' concerns are considered in a timely way.

The provider has taken sufficient action to meet the areas in the compliance notices.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/08/2024	Full	Good
22/08/2023	Full	Good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the review of care considers the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64 paragraph 15.2)
- The registered person should ensure that they keep clear records of occasions where prescribed medication is offered to children along with reasons when it is refused. This should include staff making every effort to ensure that children take medications prescribed to them, including waking them if they are asleep. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35 paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure that staff training in relation to conducting room searches considers the timeliness and implications where an immediate response is needed due to the risk to the child's or another person's safety or well-being. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16 paragraph 3.20)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2730932

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Westmorland and Furness Council

Registered provider address: Westmorland and Furness Council, Town Hall, Duke Street, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria LA14 2LD

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Curtis

Registered manager: Cheryl Athersmith

Inspector

Andrea Foreman, Social Care Inspector

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