

2730932

Registered provider: Westmorland and Furness Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to six children who experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of this inspection, five children were living in the home.

The registered manager is suitably experienced and has been in post since 5 December 2017.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 August 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: not previously inspected

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: good

Before children move into the home, staff carefully plan how best to support them on their arrival. Staff take time to get to know children and their interests and support them to engage in group activities, such as camping and zip lining. This helps children to feel welcome and quickly establish relationships with staff and other children.

Children make progress while living in the home, particularly with their education. Staff are encouraging of children's education and have high aspirations for them. This helps children to feel more confident to engage in school life. Staff provide additional support to transport children to their original school to prevent any disruption to their education.

Staff support children to spend time with the people who are important to them. This includes help with travel for those children whose family live a significant distance away. Children are also encouraged to maintain important relationships with their previous caregivers.

Children are developing positive relationships with staff from the therapy team to support their psychological well-being. Staff show determination in encouraging children to access any additional health support they need, such as drug and alcohol services.

The home is well presented. Children's bedrooms are personalised, and outdoor spaces are child focused. Children are proud of their bedrooms and feel able to express their identity in the home.

There is a positive culture in the home of support for children's diversity and promotion of tolerance. Children feel confident to share their wishes and views with staff. This is evident in everyday discussions, key-work sessions and regular meetings. Children's views are shared in staff meetings and feedback is given to children where needed.

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

Children feel safe living in the home. The staff team supports children to reflect on their experiences and develop the skills to keep themselves safe. Staff work consistently with behaviour management plans and with other agencies to safeguard children. There are effective links with the missing person and exploitation coordinator from the police, who regularly visits the home.

Staff understand the risks to children and there are appropriate plans in place with clear strategies for staff to follow. These strategies are kept under regular review.

This has resulted in children's risks reducing. For example, the risks around exploitation have reduced for the children living in the home.

The frequency of missing-from-home episodes has also reduced. When children go missing from the home, staff respond well. In addition, staff carry out follow-up key-work sessions and independent reviews with children.

Staff work hard to understand why children behave in certain ways and what the potential triggers are for their challenging behaviours. Staff are well trained to manage difficult behaviours and they reflect well on situations to learn from their experiences. Specific training was sourced to support staff's knowledge and skills in dealing with concerns about bullying. Incidents of bullying in the home are rare and staff have a good understanding of this issue.

There is no clear strategy in place around children's use of vapes and children receive inconsistent messages. For example, some children are permitted to use vapes when they are not in the home but others are not allowed to. None of the children are allowed to vape in the home, but children do not always adhere to this rule. Some children have had vapes removed but others have not. Staff's current approach is not effective in discouraging children from vaping.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has high standards for the care provided to children. As a result, children are making progress. This is particularly evident around improved education and employment outcomes for children. The manager has excellent relationships with the children and makes sure that their successes and efforts are celebrated in the home.

The manager is proactive in looking at learning opportunities for themselves and the staff. This includes carrying out reviews across key areas to consider trends and shortfalls.

The manager has reviewed the planning for children who have previously moved into the home. The manager has identified that this planning could be better. As a result, they have introduced more-detailed assessments to be used before any new children move in. These have been successfully used for the children who have recently moved into the home.

The manager has good oversight of the home. However, there is a lack of oversight of staff key-work sessions with children. This means that there are missed opportunities to consider how these could be improved to further support children.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should make best use of internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement, specifically by having oversight of key-work sessions with children to consider staff practice and children's views. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should encourage children to take a proactive role in looking after their day-to-day health and well-being. This is specifically in relation to having a clear and consistent approach to addressing issues of children smoking or vaping, which should include working with other professionals and parents to provide support for children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.10)

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: 2730932

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Lynn Berryman

Registered manager: Cheryl Athersmith

Inspector

Andrea Foreman, Social Care Inspector

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