

2731542

Registered provider: Westmorland and Furness Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides short breaks for children who may have physical disabilities and/or complex learning disabilities.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in April 2023.

Due to extensive refurbishment, there were no children accessing the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 September 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 15 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2025	Full	Good
05/03/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Renovations at the home will see significant improvements to benefit children, including adaptations that will ensure that they can access all areas and activities in the home. A high-quality soft-play area has been installed, which includes sensory items for children. The children also have access to a playroom and an outdoor area with play equipment. Each child has their own bedroom during their stay. Bedrooms are equipped with specialist equipment to meet children's individual needs. There are photos of children displayed throughout the home, which provides a warm and welcoming feel.

Children and their carers have the opportunity to meet staff and visit the home before their first stay. Staff visit children at home and in school, and individualised plans are developed for children based on information from the adults who know them best. Children's transitions towards their first stay are gradual and individually tailored to their needs. When children move on, they and their families experience positive endings.

Children are making significant progress from their starting points, and their achievements are recognised and celebrated by staff. Each child has a 'proud cloud' highlighting their progress, and these are proudly displayed in the home and are shared with children and their families. Staff use child-friendly versions to facilitate children's access to their information.

Staff provide exceptional support to children with complex health needs. Children have health files that provide staff with all relevant information about their care. Staff consult carers and medical professionals to ensure that they have up-to-date and correct information. This ensures that staff offer care and support that prioritise the children's health needs.

Children take part in a wide range of new activities and experiences that carers may not be able to offer, such as camping, sporting events, sightseeing, sailing and visiting theme parks. These new experiences give children the opportunity to discover new cultures and promote their social skills and independence.

Staff are confident in working with children who have a diverse range of needs and communication levels. This means children can express their wishes and feelings, which they do in children's meetings and during general conversations. Staff use children's communication tools and have access to a range of resources to further assist communication. This ensures that children's views are heard and helps them build confidence and self-esteem.

Children and their carers have trusting relationships with staff, which helps children to feel settled during their visits. Carers said that their children love staying at the home, and they are confident that their children are safe and well cared for.

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

Children's individualised care plans and risk assessments are comprehensive. They include guidance for staff about children's complex health needs, which helps keep them safe. Some children have positive behaviour support plans that detail how to care for and support them when they are distressed or display challenging behaviours.

When children are distressed, they are well supported by staff who are highly skilled at understanding their needs and delivering individualised care. As a result, it has not been necessary for children to be held.

Children are supported in taking positive risks. This enables children to take part in new experiences and promotes inclusivity for children with complex needs. Children in the home have learned new skills and have developed independence in a safe environment.

The manager and staff provide outreach work to children and carers when required. This includes emotional and practical support during difficult periods. When children are not visiting the home, staff offer additional activities, which maintains relationships and ensures that children feel loved and valued.

The manager carries out safer recruitment checks to ensure that the staff working with children are safe to do so.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is skilled and experienced and has an excellent understanding of children's individual needs. He is enthusiastic and strives to provide exceptional care to all children. The manager leads by example, and his high aspirations for children are shared by staff. As a result, children are making exceptional progress and are creating positive memories.

The manager is a strong advocate for children, which includes challenging partner agencies to ensure that all decisions are made in children's best interests. For example, he has successfully advocated for additional hours for a child who he felt required more support. The manager has also pursued improvements to the home to give children the best experiences when they stay. This ensures that children receive the help and support they need.

Staff speak extremely positively about the manager and the support they receive. Staff receive regular supervision, which is reflective and focused on children. The manager understands the training and support needs of staff, and he provides specialist training tailored to children's needs. This helps to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to care for all children, including those with complex needs.

The manager puts children's needs first, and this is evident from the point that children are referred to the home. Children's needs and risks are carefully considered when planning their stays. The manager and staff have built strong working relationships with

partner agencies. Communication is good between agencies, ensuring that all those working with children are up to date with any information about their risks and needs. One professional commented, 'We wish there were more [name of service] for children.'

The manager offers coffee mornings to carers and extended family members. The home also hosts events that are open to children, siblings and carers. Invitations for these events extend to neighbours and local residents. For example, a summer garden party was held, which was attended by the mayor. These events help children build relationships with the wider community.

Children benefit from a consistent core staff team, with many staff members having worked at the home for long periods. This supports the view shared by staff that they enjoy working at the home and provides familiarity and consistency to children.

An independent visitor attends the home monthly, but there is a lack of feedback gathered from partner agencies and carers. This reduces the opportunity to consider the views of external stakeholders.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make the best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('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: 2731542

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Westmorland and Furness Council

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

Responsible individual: Alison Wellman

Registered manager: Scott Henry

Inspector

Kerry Chater, Social Care Inspector

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