

2733281

Registered provider: Cumberland 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 provides care for up to six children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted on 1 April 2023. The manager is suitably experienced.

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

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 November 2024

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: 7 November 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/11/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children who previously lived in the home moved out before it closed for refurbishment. The children had planned moves to semi-independent living and to the care of their family, which were brought forward. Both children made significant progress during their time in the home.

All but one of the children currently living at the home moved into the home with a detailed transition plan. However, one child moved in on an emergency basis, with limited information provided from their previous carers. The circumstances of the child's move into the home and their past experiences mean that they have taken some time to settle into the home.

Children are developing positive relationships with the staff who care for them and with each other. The staff team is mindful of the dynamics between the children and actively encourage tolerance and understanding between them. This helps children to consider the feelings of others and to build healthy relationships.

When children are not engaging in education, the staff team works to secure a suitable provision. One child is not making the progress expected. The child is not currently in education, so staff are supporting them to get into a good routine. Staff engage the child in activities and work with them to support their emotional health and well-being.

Children's health needs are met. Direct work has been carried out with the children around the dangers of vaping, and staff are being proactive in addressing any risks around this. This is encouraging children to consider their own health needs.

Children receive support to spend time with the people who are important in their lives. This includes staff supporting a child to rebuild their relationship with a parent. One parent said that staff have tried to get to know them and will keep them updated. This helps parents to stay involved in their children's care and builds effective relationships.

There are very few male staff members working in the home, which does not reflect the children who are living in the home. This was raised by one of the children and a child's social worker. The manager is aware of this and there has been some discussion with leaders about more targeted recruitment in the future.

The home has a welcoming, family atmosphere. Several improvements have been made to the environment after a short period of closure.

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

The home was closed for two months after significant damage was caused to the property. There was a rapid escalation of concerns for two of the children who

previously lived in the home, which was unexpected given the length of time they had lived in the home and the trusting relationships they had developed.

Managers acted on these concerns to protect all the children living in the home from the impact of the increased risks. They consistently raised their concerns with professionals and ensured that children were supported throughout the process.

Risk assessments clearly set out the risks for children and demonstrate progress on a month-by-month basis. This helps staff to understand any emerging patterns and trends. Staff work with children to help them to understand how to keep themselves safe and to support children to make positive choices. Natural consequences are used in a positive way to support children to understand the impact of their behaviours on themselves and others.

Children rarely go missing from the home. However, when they do, staff follow the protocols in place to look for children and to return them home safely. Staff work hard to understand the reasons for this to prevent a reoccurrence. As a result, incidents of children going missing have decreased in frequency.

There has been one occasion when the manager and her deputy used physical intervention to support a child. The use of the measure helped the child to manage their emotions in a positive way. However, following the intervention, someone who was not involved did not carry out a debrief with the child or managers. This is not good practice and does not ensure that everyone involved, including the child, is offered an opportunity to talk to someone independent.

Staff recruitment practices are robust, which ensures that people working with children are safe to do so.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is passionate about her role. She has reflected on the recent experiences in the home and is keen to ensure that there is learning and improvement as a result. The manager is supported by an experienced deputy manager. Together, they provide strong leadership and direction for the team.

There is a stable and experienced team of staff in the home, who say they receive support in their roles. Staff say that as a team they have built up their resilience and work well together because of their shared experiences when working together.

There have been delays with the provider carrying out a full and independent learning review of the incidents which led to the home closing. In the meantime, the manager has worked with her team to carry out their own group reflection with the support of the emotional health and well-being service. As a result, the team has considered what worked well and what did not to ensure that several improvements were put in place before the home reopened.

All essential staff training is undertaken and is designed to meet the needs of the children being cared for. This training has included additional sessions led by the emotional health and well-being team to consider children's emotional health and learn about trauma-informed care. Managers have also received training on trauma-informed supervision to ensure that they can support staff effectively.

Team meetings take place at least once a month. Sessions are child focused with clear agenda points and actions being identified. Staff are fully involved in meetings to share their experiences of working with children and consider their practice. Supervision sessions take place frequently and are collaborative in nature. Staff are confident to share their views, which includes reflecting on their own practice and considering their own support needs.

Annual staff appraisals provide opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice and to consider their progress and aspirations for the future. The manager's preparation for the review does not include gathering feedback from the children who are living in the home. This is a missed opportunity to gather the views of children in developing staff practice.

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 registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and	31 December 2024

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.
(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

This specifically relates to ensuring that debriefs with the user(s) of measures of physical restraint and the child involved are carried out by a person who was not involved in the incident.

Recommendations

- The registered person should make every effort to increase the number of male staff working with children in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.22)
- The registered person should ensure that annual appraisals of staff consider, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: 2733281

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cumberland Council

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

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Curtis

Registered manager: Louisa Boswell

Inspector

Andrea Foreman, Social Care Inspector

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