

SC034083

Registered provider: Cumbria County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority owned home is registered for six children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural and/or learning difficulties. The statement of purpose details the age range of children and young people as being from 12 to 17 years.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 October 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 December 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/12/2017	Full	Good
07/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

13/12/2016

Full

Good

18/03/2016

Interim

Improved effectiveness

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, 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 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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)) Specifically, this refers to ensuring that all young people's risk assessments are complete and comprehensive.	30/11/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that particular time and any areas of high risk to the children's that the home is designed to care for, such as missing or exploitation. There is no expectation that the registered person will review the home against every part of the quality standards every six months – registered persons should use their professional judgement to decide what factors to focus on. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next 6 months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are very happy, settled and they thrive at this home. They have developed trusting and meaningful relationships with staff, who are warm and nurturing in their approach. Because of this, young people feel a real sense of belonging in this home and feel certain that staff do their very best to help and support them. One professional commented, 'Staff treat the young people with respect. They speak well of them and to them, and this respect is reciprocated by the young people towards the staff.'

The home is comfortable and homely. It has benefited from some redecoration since the last inspection. Young people contribute their ideas for the development and improvement of the home, knowing that their views and wishes are important and will be listened to. For example, one room in the home has been recently converted into a mini-gym with exercise equipment that provides them with fun as well as exercise.

Highly individualised planning ensures that staff have a sound understanding of young people's needs and how they should be supported. Young people are fully involved in planning and review processes to make sure they understand their own contribution towards meeting their needs and goals. With this approach, young people's maturity and confidence develop and grow.

Staff fully encourage young people to be ambitious and make the most of their educational opportunities. Most young people attend school and are making good progress in their learning from their starting points. Staff support their learning out of school by helping with homework and providing other learning opportunities that will stimulate their interest in education. One professional commented, 'Staff are good in promoting young people's aspirations. They are brilliant, they are encouraging and engage them in educational activities.'

The home is held in high regard by many professionals, parents and young people. The local authority acknowledges individual progress and achievements at an awards evening for excellence. One young person took great pride in telling the inspector that not only were some of the young people in this home nominated but that he had also nominated staff from the home for being 'more brilliant than last year'.

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

Young people feel safe and well cared for at this home. Care has been taken to make sure young people are well matched. They are of similar age, share common interests and are compatible in that they are deemed unlikely to compromise each other's safety. Young people play their part in welcoming those young people moving into the home, appreciating that they may feel anxious or worried. Young people do not identify bullying as an issue in this home and know that staff would deal with any such issues should they arise. Consequently, young people are confident that staff keep them safe.

Young people's individual risk assessments are generally well written and provide staff with the information they need to understand and know how to deal with young people's risk-taking behaviours and vulnerabilities. However, a few inconsistencies identified in some young people's records indicated that some risks were not clearly expressed or dealt with. Although these were not found to have compromised any young person's safety, these inconsistencies failed to provide a comprehensive assessment of young people's risk.

Young people generally respect the house rules and boundaries set by staff. They have clear expectations of staff and their own behaviour and, for most of the time, live very harmoniously together. Staff attribute this to their knowledge of young people and the good relationships they share with them.

Staff are experienced and skilled in dealing with conflict and challenging behaviour. Incidents tend to be rare but when these do occur, staff are proactive and use their judgement and training to de-escalate conflict and repair relationships. The absence of any use of physical intervention since the last inspection appropriately reflects the stability that young people feel and the success of staff in managing young people's behaviour.

Young people are rarely reported missing from this home, although there are occasions when they fail to return to the home as agreed. When this happens, staff are proactive. They have knowledge of the places where the young people are likely to go, and the staff will search the locality until the young people are returned to the safety of the home. Staff are familiar with local protocols for those missing and they work effectively with the police, involving them when it is appropriate to do so, actively reducing the young people's risk of harm.

Young people are healthy. Staff work in good partnership with a range of health professionals to ensure that young people receive the support they require to maintain good physical health and emotional well-being. For instance, one young person has specific dietary requirements that staff monitor both at home and at school to ensure that his health is not compromised.

Good arrangements exist to promote the health and safety of young people, staff and those who visit the home. For example, regular checks are undertaken to ensure that fire prevention equipment and systems are in good working order. Young people take part in regular fire evacuation drills that ensure that they are confident in knowing what to do should there be a real emergency.

All staff employed in the home are trained and experienced in working with children and young people. Prior to coming to the home, staff are fully checked and vetted at the recruitment stage, to ensure that they are unlikely to pose a threat to, or compromise, the safety of young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has been in post since prior to 2007, when the regulation of the home became the responsibility of Ofsted. Her management team has been further strengthened since the last inspection, with the addition of a third assistant manager to support the smooth running of the home. All are suitably experienced and possess a level 5 diploma qualification.

With the registered manager on annual leave at the time of this inspection, the assistant managers and staff members were able to demonstrate just how well the home operates in the absence of the registered manager. All are knowledgeable about the young people in their care and clearly voice their commitment to providing a high standard of care.

There have been very few changes in the staff team since the last inspection. Because of this, young people have good opportunities to build positive relationships with staff and benefit from the continuity of care the staff team provides. Staff are good advocates and role models for young people. With their support, young people mature and become more resilient as they move towards independence.

Managers and staff work in good partnership with other professionals and agencies to ensure that young people achieve good outcomes as a result of living at this home. Professionals and parents unanimously recognise the ambition and commitment of the registered manager and her staff team. One professional commented that the manager leads by example and always puts the children's needs first, saying, 'She will professionally challenge staff and professionals if she does not feel the children are being listened to.'

Staff feel well supported and valued in their roles. They identify not only the arrangements for training, professional supervision and annual appraisal as supportive, but also feel that senior managers take interest in and support their work in caring for young people. Staff identify regular visits by senior managers within the local authority as important in checking and validating their success in supporting the young people living at this home.

Internal and external monitoring arrangements are well established and help inform the home's development planning. The registered manager has kept Ofsted aware of any incidents occurring at the home, as required. She has provided Ofsted with a six-monthly report resulting from her quality of care review. This was comprehensive and lengthy, as the report dealt with all quality standards, instead of only those most relevant in this time period. In addition, it failed to conclude with a plan for the six months ahead, which would also help and inform development planning.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children

and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC034083

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Cumbria House, 107–117 Botchergate, Carlisle, Cumbria CA1 1RZ

Responsible individual: Lynn Berryman

Registered manager: Caroline Reid

Inspector

Gillian Walters, social care inspector

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