

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: 20 to 21 December 2017

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: 7 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people are happy, feel safe and say they enjoy living at this home.
- Young people enjoy very positive relationships with staff and feel that staff genuinely care for them.
- Young people have a voice in this home. They say that staff listen to them and

take their views into account. Consequently, they feel that their views and wishes are valued.

- Young people regularly attend school or college and make good progress. Their learning is well supported by staff who are ambitious for them to reach their full potential.
- Young people appreciate the support the home extends to their family members. This is successful in promoting their contact with family and rebuilding relationships with those who are significant in their lives.
- Families and professionals speak highly of the support young people receive, and identify the home as offering young people considerable support and stability.
- The home is well led and managed by an experienced management team whose members have been in post for a considerable number of years. They work well together to provide consistency both to the staff team and the young people they care for.
- Good monitoring arrangements exist internally and externally to ensure robust scrutiny of the home and the service that it delivers. This ensures that young people receive a consistent quality of care and support.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Arrangements for fire safety are not consistently adhered to. Specifically, firefighting equipment should be kept in designated locations that are easily accessible to staff.
- The quality of restraint recording should be improved, ensuring that records are completed with all the necessary detail as outlined in regulation.
- The home should have a homely environment that is welcoming and comfortable for young people. Specifically, graffiti should be removed and damage to walls repaired; these detract from the homeliness of the property.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/12/2016	Full	Good
18/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/09/2015	Full	Good

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
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)) This refers specifically to fire extinguishers being kept in suitable locations where staff can easily access them in the event of a fire.	28/02/2018
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— (i) the name of the child; (ii) details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; (iii) the date, time and location of the use of the measure; (iv) a description of the measure and its duration; (v) details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; (vi) the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; (vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and (viii) a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(i)-(viii))	28/02/2018

Recommendations

- Seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

This relates specifically to the removal of graffiti scratched into paintwork in the

young people's bathroom.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are happy, feel safe and enjoy living at this home. They benefit from the support of an experienced and well-established staff team that understands their needs and how these are to be met.

Young people feel that staff genuinely care for them and want them to be happy and successful in what they do. One young person commented, 'I really like it at this home. Staff are all really caring and help us. I feel safe and I can talk to any of the staff if I am worried about anything.'

Young people enjoy very positive relationships with staff. They frequently comment on the good relationships, and the support that is also offered to their families. For some young people, they say that it is because of this support that they have had their care orders revoked, allowing them to return home to live with their families. One young person happily commented, 'I'm at home now. Staff helped me get back to my family. They listened and they supported us.'

Placement planning is effective in addressing young people's individual needs. Young people actively participate in this process, gaining increased confidence in being able to express their views. They know that staff listen to them and they feel that their views are taken into account. Staff understand the importance for young people to know their history and understand the events that led to them coming into care. Young people benefit from the additional support of an emotional well-being certified practitioner who is attached to the home. They have good opportunities to participate in therapeutic life story work programmes that are designed to help them explore their former childhood experiences. Consequently, this reduces young people's confusion and anxiety, increasing their self-esteem and their own sense of identity.

Young people are healthy. Staff guide young people to understand the importance of maintaining a healthy diet and healthy lifestyle. Young people are registered with local healthcare services to ensure that their routine health needs are successfully met. Young people receive positive guidance and support from staff to ensure that they remain in good health. Staff actively discourage young people from activities such as smoking, and the misuse of alcohol and drugs, that may cause long-term damage to their health.

Young people make good progress in their learning from their starting points. Education is a key priority for staff. They provide support with homework and ensure that additional opportunities for learning occur in the home. This promotes positive growth in young people's maturity and independence. One social worker commented, 'I am of the opinion that the staff support has been very positive for this young person. This is reflected in his behaviours in school, during contact with his parents and in the home. I feel their support will enable him to achieve the good GCSE results and will prepare him

to move on to further education and independent living.'

Young people have the additional support of an education coordinator who works alongside staff, the authority's inclusion team and other relevant professionals concerned with their education plans. This focused support ensures that young people have good access to available education opportunities and resources that help them reach their full learning potential. One social worker commented, 'He has been through several college courses this year. Staff have persevered with his education and shown enthusiasm for him. They think out of the box. Before he arrived at this home there was a real lack of engagement from him. They have helped him make really good progress.'

Young people enjoy regular contact with family and friends. They especially appreciate that staff always make family members very welcome when they come to visit. Because of this, young people are able to successfully maintain and rebuild those relationships that are most important to them. A parent commented, 'Staff are good at keeping me informed. We work together. I can call in and they phone me regularly. They have supported us both.'

Professionals also speak highly of the support young people receive. They identify the home as offering considerable stability for a number of young people. One said, 'They have brought him on in leaps and bounds and his confidence is soaring. I genuinely believe he is going to have a very positive future. From my experience in working alongside the staff, I feel that the young people are treated fairly and have consistent boundaries in place.'

Overall the home is very comfortable and quite well maintained by staff. However, some parts of the home are looking rather tired and in need of some further decoration. Graffiti damage to a wall in the young people's bathroom detracts from the otherwise homeliness of the property. Despite this, young people were unanimous that they would rate this home 10 out of 10.

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

Young people say they feel safe living at this home. They identify the good relationships they have with staff and the quality of care they receive as being key to their safety. One young person commented, 'They keep me safe and care about us being safe. If anyone were to threaten me, I know they would call the police.'

Young people generally get on well with their peers and do not identify bullying as a problem at this home. One parent said, 'I felt he might be led astray when he came to this home. I talked to staff about it, and I felt reassured that staff were on top of things.'

Young people's risks and vulnerabilities are well understood and reflected in individual risk assessments. The format of these has been reviewed and updated as a result of the last inspection, making them more thorough and comprehensive. These provide positive guidance and are sufficiently detailed to inform staff of issues or circumstances that may

trigger certain behaviours, and how these can be best dealt with.

Staff are kept up to date with current child protection issues and safeguarding practice. All staff benefit from regular training by the authority and the local safeguarding children board. Although these areas are not seen as an immediate concern for this home, all staff have received recent training on radicalisation, extremism and child sexual exploitation. This ensures that staff are aware of the signs to look out for, and have sufficient knowledge to meet the needs of those children who may be at risk.

Young people are, on occasion, reported as missing from the home. However, this tends to be the result of young people's failure to return home on time when they have been socialising with their peers in the local community. These missing episodes also tend to be for short periods of time. However, despite the period of time, staff always make sure that young people speak with their social worker after such events in case they have any worries or concerns that they feel unable to share with staff.

Restraint is seldom used. However, during this inspection some shortfalls were identified with the content of some individual incidents recorded. Although these did not undermine the accuracy of the events, some records were incomplete and did not meet the regulatory standard. Young people understand the rules and boundaries of the home. They are generally very polite and respectful towards staff. The use of sanctions has declined following a review by the registered manager. She found that these were not always meaningful or effective. Young people respond positively to the small treats and incentives made available to promote their good behaviour.

The home has good arrangements in place to ensure the health and safety of young people, staff and any visitors to the home. Staff regularly check to ensure that all electrical and other equipment, such as alarms, remain safe and in good working order. Young people and staff are familiar with the home's evacuation procedure, and practice this at regular intervals to ensure that they are well rehearsed to know what to do in the event of an emergency. Visitors are also advised of the arrangements in the home. However, during this inspection it was noted that fire extinguishers had been removed from their agreed location and were not readily available to staff. Although these were eventually located, concern remained that they could not be accessed quickly enough, if required. In the event of a fire, this could compromise young people's safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home's registered manager has been in post since before 2007, when the regulations became the responsibility of Ofsted. She is suitably qualified and experienced in working with young people, and possesses the required level 5 diploma qualification. She is ably supported in her role by two experienced and qualified assistant managers. As a management team, they are ambitious for the young people in their care and are committed to providing a high standard of care.

Managers and staff work in good cooperation with a range of professionals. They are fully committed to ensuring that young people's needs are understood and appropriately

met. They have proved to be successful advocates for young people, especially for those who have been eager to return to their parents' care. Through professional challenge they have been able to influence significant changes in young people's care planning, and have supported them effectively to move on from the home.

Staff are competent and between them share a wide range of experience. The staff team has remained stable, with an exceptionally low turnover of staff. Staff say they enjoy coming to work and feel very well supported in their roles. Regular supervision ensures that staff have dedicated time to discuss their professional practice and their involvement in young people's care planning and delivery. A member of staff commented, 'We all receive monthly supervision but we can request a meeting sooner if we wanted. I would be surprised if any staff member didn't feel supported. We are a really strong team and provide young people with good continuity.'

Staff development is seen as an ongoing process and is highly valued by the organisation and staff. Regular opportunities for professional development are offered through the organisation's training schedule, multidisciplinary working and regular staff meetings at the home. Staff performance is regularly monitored and formally appraised at least annually. This makes sure that staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles and maintain a good standard of practice. Young people's views are sought during this process and taken into account. This demonstrates an inclusive approach that takes account of young people's views and values them.

Two requirements and one recommendation made at the last interim inspection on 19 April 2017 have been suitably met. Revision of risk assessments and an internal review of the use of sanctions demonstrate the home's commitment to continuous improvement. Internal monitoring processes have been strengthened, and external monitoring is also sufficiently robust. Combined, these successfully inform the home's development plan, which aims to make sure that young people are safe and provided with a high standard of care and support.

The home continues to work in accordance with the objectives stated in its statement of purpose. Managers make sure they keep Ofsted and other relevant parties informed of any significant events that occur in the home or with young people. Apart from maintaining good partnership arrangements, this promotes transparency with Ofsted between inspections.

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: Deborah Evans

Registered manager: Caroline Reid

Inspector(s)

Gillian Walters, social care inspector

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