

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 children's home provides care for up to six children.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 23 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/03/2022	Full	Good
10/10/2018	Full	Good
20/12/2017	Full	Good
07/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children say they feel safe and cared for. They form strong relationships with staff they trust and can talk to. Key-work sessions take place to help children to focus on the targets for their placement, for example, developing independence skills and preparation for moving on. However, sessions do not take place consistently and there is a tendency for sessions to be reactive rather than planned.

All the children have suitable full-time school or college placements and are making consistent progress. The staff help the children with their preparation for upcoming exams. The children are provided with a wealth of revision tools and textbooks to support them in their educational journey.

Children's health is prioritised. They are registered with local healthcare practitioners and attend routine appointments. Children are supported by therapeutic services provided by the local authority. They fully engage with the services. One child said, 'Things are actually beginning to make sense to me.'

Family time is consistently promoted and supported. Additional help is provided to families through the local authority emotional support team. This work helps children and their families rebuild positive and safe relationships.

Children are supported and encouraged to personalise their bedrooms, for example with pictures and posters. However, children's privacy is compromised due to a lack of window coverings, such as a blind or an alternative covering.

Children's participation in recreational activities and hobbies is encouraged and supported. Children are members of football teams and rugby teams. One child has achieved a level 7 in refereeing and spends his weekends supporting the under-11s football team. Children also make friends in the community and enjoy overnight stays at friends' homes.

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

Overall, children are not involved in behaviours that place them at risk.

Since the last inspection, in March 2022, there have been no incidents where children have needed to be held to keep them safe. Likewise, children rarely go missing or are absent from the home. On the two occasions when this has occurred, staff took swift and effective action to ensure children's safe return.

Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. This means that children's known risks are recognised and understood by the staff working with them. However, some risk assessments would benefit from clearer strategies for managing

challenges, such as how staff respond to a child breaking bedroom furniture when they are distressed.

Behaviour management plans help the children to recognise that some behaviours are not acceptable or appropriate. Key-work discussions support these plans and offer an opportunity for the children to discuss their feelings about recent behaviours. However, not all consequences used are reflective of the behaviour exhibited. Therefore, there are missed opportunities for children to learn about the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others.

Staff carry out a room search if there is a concern regarding the welfare of a child. Each search is recorded and includes a list of any items removed from the room. However, the record does not include where items are stored for safe-keeping.

Appropriate action is taken in the event of a child making a complaint or allegation. Records detail the investigation processes and there is appropriate liaison with external safeguarding professionals. Children are provided with a written outcome detailing any actions that are to be taken because of the issues they have raised.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager retired from her position in July 2022. A new acting manager was appointed in November 2022. However, the acting manager has not submitted an application to register.

Safer recruitment procedures are not consistently adhered to. Records for some new staff did not include details such as reference verification. The acting manager was quick to raise this with the local authority and most records were made available by the end of this inspection.

The refurbishment plans for the home have not yet been carried out. This means the kitchen and bathrooms remain dated and corridors are dark and uninviting. In addition, there are locks on internal doors in the home and children's bedroom furniture is worn and, in some cases, damaged.

A refurbishment programme has been agreed in principle and plans have been drawn up. However, the acting manager has not been provided with a date for this work to start.

External monitoring takes place in accordance with regulation. Reports provide the acting manager with actions to help improve the service being provided to children. However, the independent visitor does not routinely review the children's bedrooms, and therefore an analysis of the standard of these rooms is not included in the report.

The acting manager reviews the work being undertaken with the children and provides guidance for staff on how to progress each child's plans.

Most staff are qualified. Newly employed staff have successfully completed a probationary period and are due to be enrolled on the required course. This training ensures that staff are suitably equipped to undertake their role with children. Likewise, staff receive further ongoing training, including mandatory training and online training focused on the specific needs of children.

Staff receive support from the acting manager and two experienced assistant managers. Formal supervisions take place regularly and informal support is available daily. A staff member said, 'The management team is great. There is a different atmosphere now in the home. It is nice to work here.'

Notifications in accordance with regulation 40 are not consistently provided to Ofsted. This means that the regulatory body is not kept informed of serious or significant incidents or how they have been managed.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— ensure the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1) (2)(c)(i)(ii))	28 April 2023
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))	28 April 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the person appointed to manage the home applies for registration with Ofsted. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 60, paragraph 12.2)
- The registered person should ensure that children's personal space, which is usually their bedrooms, has appropriate window coverings, to ensure children's privacy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.18)

- The registered person should ensure that when a child's room is searched and items are removed, a record is held of where items are stored for safe-keeping. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and ensure the strategies in place to protect them are routinely updated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 145, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that the work undertaken with children to build their resilience to cope with and withstand challenges and difficulties is consistently reflected in their records. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.4)
- The registered person should ensure that any consequence used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person should ensure that the independent visitor consistently reviews the children's bedrooms as part of the independent visit. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.8)

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: SC034083

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cumbria County Council

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

Responsible individual: Lynn Berryman

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Maria McGranaghan, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023