

# SC061810

Registered provider: Cumbria County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is registered to accommodate six young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is managed by the local authority.

**Inspection dates:** 9 to 10 May 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:** 2 May 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 02/05/2017      | Full            | Good                    |
| 19/01/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 14/06/2016      | Full            | Good                    |
| 23/02/2016      | Interim         | Sustained 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 independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44(7)(a)) | 12/06/2018 |

### Recommendations

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11) Specifically, this relates to seeking young people's views on food and meals and providing them with meals they enjoy.
- Regulation 19(2) details sanctions that are prohibited in behaviour management. Any sanctions 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. In some cases it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38) Specifically this relates to the home not overusing any particular sanction, to evidence that sanctions are restorative, to ensure that sanctions are reviewed for effectiveness and for celebrating and rewarding positive behaviour as well as sanctioning negative behaviour.

### Inspection judgements

#### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people progress well in this home. They are well matched, settle quickly and develop strong relationships with the stable staff team. Staff work hard to identify each young person's individual needs and establish how best to help and support them to move forward. Some examples of the good progress young people make include them

being able to go on the school ski trip, take part in community activities, enjoy holidays and gain an apprenticeship.

Young people benefit from a dedicated education coordinator. They work in close partnership with the education provider to ensure that young people are getting the best support to help them attend and achieve in their education. Young people attend well and some have taken or are preparing to sit the GCSE examinations. Monthly education reports are compiled to keep a close focus on young people's progression and engagement. The staff have close links with young people's schools and they work in partnership to provide an individually tailored package of support. One young person has an agreement to start later each morning and one young person has engaged exceptionally well and has had highly positive feedback from school.

Young people feel they are listened to. Key-work sessions evidence that a wide range of issues are discussed, ranging from personal issues affecting each young person to wider discussions about current issues in the world today. This serves to educate young people, enables them to formulate their views and to increase their awareness of wider society and culture.

Young people who do not feel the home is the right place for them understand what their plan is and how they need to progress to achieve a move to a placement which is more in line with their wishes. One area that young people commented on is regarding the meals served in the home. At the last full inspection young people commented that meals were not always to their liking and, although efforts have been made to involve young people in choosing meals and adding to the shopping list, they continue to complain that the food is not in line with their wishes and tastes.

Transitions into and out of the home are well planned and managed. Some young people benefit from very detailed transition plans, where they gradually increase the time that they spend in the home and out on activities with staff and other young people. This helps to prepare young people who come to live in the home. For those preparing to move on there is a training annexe attached to the home where young people can prepare for independent living. Skills taught are not only practical skills, such as washing, budgeting and preparing meals, but also softer skills, such as dealing with loneliness.

The local authority employs an emotional resilience worker to engage with young people. This worker provides support directly to young people as well as supporting staff to create a trauma-informed therapeutic process around each young person. The emotional resilience worker speaks highly of staff at the home and reports that staff are positive about adopting new ideas and concepts and taking advice from him. This enables staff to provide the foundation for young people to feel safe and develop relationships.

Young people's relationships can be mixed at times, particularly as young people leave and others are admitted, resulting in a change in the home's dynamics. Young people are supported to develop positive and tolerant relationships. When there are more

serious issues between young people, staff hold restorative meetings to try to improve relationships. Young people report that although they do not always get along, staff do intervene when there is a need and there is no bullying in the home. One young person is older than the others and provides some degree of support and is a role model to the younger girls in the home.

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

Young people all make progress in respect of reducing their child sexual exploitation risks. Staff work hard to educate them about their own risks and have put safety plans in place which are agreed at regular multi-agency meetings. Police report that the home works in close partnership with them and staff always adhere to young people's safety plans.

Risks for young people are identified and staff regularly update young people's risk assessments with new information. One young person attempted to assault another young person and seriously assaulted a member of staff. Managers assessed that her risks were too great for her to be returned to the home and arranged for her to be moved from the home, thus protecting young people and staff from further assault. This was the only occasion when the home contacted the police for assistance with managing a young person's behaviour. This evidences that positive behaviour management strategies are in place for the other young people and that staff consider the impact of criminalising young people unnecessarily.

Staff allow young people to take age-appropriate risks that have been risk-assessed. This includes taking free time and socialising within the community. There have been several occasions when young people have made a choice to consume alcohol or cannabis. Such behaviour is sanctioned, and young people are educated about the risks that they place themselves at. Sanctions can be overused and their effectiveness is not fully evaluated to consider whether alternative, more restorative sanctions could be more useful.

Missing from home has been a persistent issue for one young person placed at the home. This young person's child sexual exploitation risks were not reducing and she was moved to a more specialised placement when it became clear that the home was not meeting her safety needs effectively. Missing from home records are sufficiently detailed and independent return interviews are offered to young people following missing incidents. Staff attend strategy meetings for young people who have frequent missing episodes and engage with the wider system to discuss appropriate strategies to minimise the risks. Missing from home episodes are rare for the current cohort of girls in the home.

The Signs of Safety model has been adopted by the local authority and is in the process of being implemented across a range of plans for young people.

Young people are clear about the rules and boundaries in place. Young people report that the rules are generally fair. However, some young people said that they would like

more free time and to be allowed to return later than is expected. Some young people felt that sanctions were not effective and felt they would learn more from a discussion around their behaviour. The young people spoken to report that they feel safe in the home.

The manager has a good understanding of her responsibilities in respect of health and safety, and ensures that the home environment is safe. Safer recruitment processes are well embedded in the large organisation and young people are cared for by people who do not pose a risk to them.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The home's newly registered manager is very experienced and has worked in the home for many years. She is dedicated and enthusiastic and staff and young people speak highly of her management approach. Young people feel that managers care about them and staff feel well supported. The manager is in the process of updating and reorganising the filing and recording systems in the home as some documents were difficult to locate during the inspection. The manager has high aspirations for the young people in placement and shows commitment to supporting them to achieve.

The home's management team has undergone some changes and two new deputy managers have been appointed. The manager has identified that a new management team is a potential weakness for the home and has plans in place to embed and develop the team.

Many of the home's staff have been employed at the home for several years, bringing stability and experience to the staff team and young people. There have been some staff vacancies and sickness, which has necessitated staff taking on additional shifts. Two new staff have been recruited and this will ease the pressure on the staff rota. The home deploys staff in line with the needs of the young people placed, and rotas reflect that the home is always sufficiently staffed. Staff spoken to reported that they were provided with regular support, supervision and training and were positive about working in the home.

Managers have developed positive relationships with partner agencies. They work together to provide good all-round support to young people. External agencies consulted as part of this inspection spoke very highly of the collaborative approach of the home.

The manager remains highly involved in young people's day-to-day lives and consequently has a good understanding of the progress they make. Young people feel confident to raise any issues with the managers, and young people are keen to share their views on a daily basis with staff, which results in them feeling listened to.

The manager uses feedback from young people and external agencies to evaluate the service, including using exit interviews when young people leave the home. Internal and external monitoring systems are in place and are used by the manager to develop and improve the service. Although monitoring visits have taken place each month, no

independent visitor's reports were sent to the regulator for a number of months, which impeded the ability of the regulator to monitor and risk-assess the home, and results in a requirement being made at this inspection.

The local authority has appointed a new responsible individual for the home. The regulator does not yet have notice of this and has not therefore considered their suitability. This has not resulted in a requirement being made due to the individual being newly appointed, although the correct notifications should be sent to the regulator in a timely manner.

## **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:** SC061810

**Provision sub-type:** children's home

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

**Responsible individual:** Deborah Evans

**Registered manager:** Cheryl Athersmith

## Inspector

Charlie Bamber, social care inspector



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