

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	14 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC061810
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Cumbria County Council
Registered provider address	Organisational Development, The Courts, English Street, Carlisle CA3 8NA

Responsible individual	Walter McCulloch
Registered manager	Colin Wall
Inspector	Charlie Bamber

Inspection date	14 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC061810

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people receive a good level of support throughout their placement. This helps them to make progress in all areas. A stable and consistent staff team enables the young people to develop secure and trusting relationships with staff, which contributes to their progress.
- Where young people have specific areas of risk, there are positive safety plans in place to take action to manage and address the risk.
- Staff have a good level of understanding about risk-taking behaviours and are skilled in responding to young people's safeguarding needs.
- The home adopts an inclusive ethos to risk management, and works closely with partner agencies to achieve good outcomes in respect of safeguarding issues.
- Some young people have sustained their education placements and have exceeded expectations in respect of qualifications that they have been able to take. The home's response to the young people's educational needs is well thought out and individualised, which ensures that most young people access some form of education.
- Managers are able to recognise when a young person is not making the expected progress, and take action to ensure that their placement is reviewed. Staff are tenacious in their efforts to support young people.
- Planning for admission is robust, and managers carefully consider any new admissions. One area identified for improvement is the recording of admission planning, to illustrate the depth of consideration that takes place prior to the admission of a young person.
- Record keeping for young people is generally good, although this inspection has highlighted that there are areas in which it could be improved.
- The home's statement of purpose requires revision and a copy should be sent to Ofsted.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
16: Statement of purpose (3) The registered person must— (a) keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and (b) notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (5) Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose.	14 July 2016
36: Children's case records (1) The registered person must maintain records for each child which— (b) are kept up to date; and (c) are signed and dated by the author of each entry.	14 July 2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children.

This relates specifically to ensuring that the record of placement suitability assessment is detailed and fully individual to each young person ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4).

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to accommodate six young people of mixed gender, aged between 10 and 17 years old who have an emotional and/or behavioural difficulty. The home is managed by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23 February 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
8 October 2015	Full	Good
9 February 2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
24 June 2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The home caters for six young people with a wide range of needs. A particular strength of the staff is their understanding of the specific and individual needs of the young people. Staff at the home know the young people very well and are skilled in their responses to them, understanding what works well for each young person. Many of the staff have been in post for some time, which provides young people with consistency and stability. This helps them to build trusting relationships where they feel able to share their worries and concerns. Staff are adept at interpreting changes in young people's behaviours, and work hard to understand what issues may be affecting young people at any given time. One example of this is understanding the impact on a young person of a relationship ending, and providing them with additional nurture and support. The home has good links with agencies which support the young people's health. Young people access routine health appointments and are supported to address more complex health needs, such as self-harming behaviour. The home advocates for young people where they believe there is a need for more specialised support, such as a psychological assessment. The looked after children's nurse reports a positive relationship with the home and believes that the health needs of the young people placed are well met. Staff members take lead roles in areas that they have skills or an interest in. This system works very well to develop expertise across a wide range of areas, and helps to ensure that young people's broad spectrum of needs are met. The education coordinator has very good links with the young people's education provisions, and ensures that the appropriate setting and timetables are in place. Some young people do not have good attendance at education, and this is reviewed and addressed in close partnership with schools and colleges. Other young people have taken examinations at a level which exceeds expectations. Where young people refuse to engage in education, the home offers support to try to get them back into education. Staff listen to what the young people want in respect of education and try to find provision to meet their requirements. There are a number of ways in which the young people's views are taken into account. The positive relationships that young people share with staff and managers mean that they frequently express their opinions through both formal and informal channels. Although none of the residents have made formal	

complaints, they have raised a number of issues that have been addressed through the residents meeting forum.

Young people are encouraged to take part in activities, and to lead active and healthy lifestyles. A holiday to France has been arranged for the summer, and a number of young people will have the opportunity to participate and benefit from this experience.

A number of young people at this home are preparing for transitions. They are supported to share their views on their future placements. There is support for them to develop their independence through budgeting and food preparation.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Risks for young people are understood at the point of entry to the home, and staff understand that risk is dynamic. They are responsive to young people's changing needs. Risks are generally well managed, with clear plans in place for issues such as missing from home and child sexual exploitation. For most young people, risks are reduced from their starting points, some significantly so. For other young people, risk levels remain high, and the home offers a co-ordinated and robust response to this. Where the home has tried everything it can to manage a young person's risks and they are not making progress, or where a young person's behaviour is impacting on other young people's safety, a review of placement is requested to consider the suitability of the placement. For young people with very high risk areas (such as missing from home, child sexual exploitation and drug misuse), there are multi-agency safeguarding plans in place where an agreed joined up response is provided to the young person. Their safety plans are outcome focused, have clear actions and are regularly reviewed. Where young people remain at high risk, parents and external agencies are clear that the home has tried everything possible in order to reduce the risk and to support the young person. For young people who go missing, there are close links with the police and an agreed protocol in place. Independent 'return' interviews are always offered to young people following episodes of missing from care. When young people go missing, staff make every effort to find them, or to monitor their well-being when their whereabouts is known but they refuse to return. Parents are kept informed and up to date when their child has gone missing, and value the good communication that they have with the home. Staff are extremely vigilant to risk and take effective action when situations arise. Examples include taking photographs of car licence plates and sharing these with	

the police if children are collected from the home by unknown people and go missing, and conducting regular checks throughout the night of young people thought to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Boundaries are in place that are observed by most young people. There are clear consequences imposed if behaviour falls below expected and acceptable levels, and these are reviewed for effectiveness. Much of the work completed around behaviour is discussed in key-worker sessions and informally, on a one-to-one basis, with young people. There is also evidence of discussion around rules and boundaries in residents' meetings. When issues are raised in this forum, they are subsequently discussed in staff team meetings and the outcome fed back to the young people via their key workers.

There have been no incidents since the last full inspection, when restrictive physical intervention has been used. This indicates that staff are skilled at de-escalating situations, and defusing anger and aggression.

The physical environment of the home is safe, and new fire doors have recently been fitted.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home is led by a suitably experienced manager who is qualified to level 4 and undertaking the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential care. The staff are mostly qualified to level 3, and those who are not yet qualified are enrolled on the course. There are three assistant managers in post to support the manager, two of whom are also undertaking the level 5 diploma. The staff team is consistent and stable, with few changes since the last full inspection. Some staff take on additional roles such as child sexual exploitation champion, education coordinator and domestic abuse champion. This develops expertise among the staff team and expertise is disseminated at team meetings and team development days to increase all staff's awareness of issues which may be affecting the young people. The staff have a wide range of skills and experience to provide support to young people, and receive regular training to continue their professional development. The management team is relatively new (although some managers previously worked as residential support workers, therefore are not new to the home). It is still embedding itself and developing best practice. The manager identifies the consolidation of management practice as an area for development, as the senior team's experience as a management team progresses.	

The home's statement of purpose is not up to date, stating that the home does not care for young people beyond their 17th birthday. Additionally, it shows the incorrect details for the responsible individual. This requires revision, and a requirement is made. Although the home is working outside of its statement of purpose by providing care to a young people aged 17, placements have been considered and this does not negatively impact on any of the young people placed.

There were some deficits noted in the quality of the reports of the independent visitor. The manager had acted on this, and had met with the agency and ensured that an alternative visitor was appointed. The quality of the most recent report is much improved.

Staff report that they are well supported in their roles, receiving regular supervision and annual appraisal. They report that the management team is committed to the young people and receptive to their views.

Staff and managers advocate on behalf of young people. They are able to identify when the placement is not meeting a young person's needs and they are not making progress, and take action to address this. This has included calling an early review of placement where safeguarding concerns are identified.

In discussion with the registered manager, it is apparent that placement matching is detailed and well considered. However, the records do not reflect this, and the considerations form in use is mainly generic and lacks a high degree of individualisation. A recommendation is made in respect of this to improve the quality of recording around placement matching.

Record keeping is of a generally high standard, although it needs more robust oversight to ensure that it is of a consistently high standard. Some records and assessments did not identify the date or the author, or lacked some information (for example, whether an independent return interview had taken place following a missing from home incident). The information was available elsewhere, therefore there was no impact on the young person. A requirement is made in relation to recording to ensure that all records contain the full relevant information, are of a good standard, and are dated and signed by the author.

A particular strength of the home is the partnership work that takes place. The home is highly inclusive of its partner agencies and proactive in ensuring that partners are involved and kept informed. The development of these close links ensures a joined-up approach to meeting young people's needs.

The one requirement made at the last interim inspection has been met. This related to the education provision for one young person who has since gone on to engage in tutoring sessions and sit GCSE examinations.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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