

SC061810

Cumbria County Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

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

The current manager has been registered with Ofsted since 19 March 2018.

Inspection date: 27 January 2021

This monitoring visit

This monitoring visit was instigated due to concerns raised to the regulator through independent monitoring. Information provided within regulation 44 reports suggested that:

- Young people do not feel safe.
- Professionals believe that young people are not safeguarded.
- Professionals believe that young people are not adequately supervised.
- Incidents of missing from home have significantly increased.
- Incidents of bullying in the home are frequent and of a serious nature.

Due to the nature of the concerns raised, the inspector visited the home to speak directly with young people and staff. The remainder of the visit was completed remotely.

The impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) has intensified pre-existing concerns about the supervision and safety of young people living in this home. During this visit, the registered manager was proactive in taking steps to minimise this impact.

There have been some occurrences of bullying and coercion in the home. Due to the occupancy and reduced staffing ratios, bullying incidents are not always prevented or intercepted. For example, one incident of bullying led to a young person sharing a personal and sensitive image online. Other incidents have resulted in physical

assaults on a young person. When bullying behaviours have been displayed, they have been challenged. However, young people require further support to reduce these behaviours and for the victims of bullying to feel safe.

Young people frequently go missing from home. This is not usually for long periods of time. Unfortunately, one incident did occur where a young person had been missing for some days. This young person did not have a means of communication. A lack of available staff within the home meant that they were unable to search for him. This means that the home does not have enough staff to support young people in line with formal procedures and young people's plans.

Staff have clearly identified roles and feel supported by managers. One staff member has detailed knowledge in the area of exploitation. This staff member is identified as a 'champion' in this area. The role involves working closely with external agencies to gain local intelligence and insight. On one occasion, this knowledge and understanding helped to protect a young person from exploitation and ensure her safety.

Not all staff are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of a young person making an allegation of abuse. This has the potential to impact on the safety of young people and those working in the home.

During the visit, one staff member made negative references in relation to the behaviour displayed by young people. This shows a lack of understanding of young people's histories and the impact that past experiences may have. This has the potential to jeopardise positive relationships and does not reflect the mutual, respectful and nurturing relationships that young people need.

Young people have access to support and guidance. Keyworker sessions completed show that staff recognise when young people are facing difficulties. At these times, staff provide good emotional support and advice. Young people are also accessing local groups and relevant external agencies. Having access to different sources of support helps young people to progress, and form important networks for their future.

Adaptations have been made to the daily running of the home to prevent the spread of the virus. This includes restrictions to the kitchen and dining area. This means that young people are prevented from having free access to all areas within their own home. A requirement has been made to address this.

The home is decorated to a high standard within communal areas. One young person's bathroom is not of the same standard. This bathroom lacks decoration and appears tired and 'institutionalised'. As a result, this young person is not provided with the homely, domestic environment she deserves.

Feedback from social workers is positive. Communication is frequent and they receive regular updates from the staff about incidents and concerns. Social workers

recognise the current pressures presented by COVID-19 and acknowledge that this has been a difficult period for young people and those working in the home. Despite difficulties, social workers believe young people to be appropriately protected from harm and well cared for.

The requirements made at the last inspection were not specifically addressed at this monitoring visit. They are, therefore, carried over until the home has its next full inspection in line with the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2020	Full	Good
09/05/2018	Full	Good
02/05/2017	Full	Good
19/01/2017	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 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 all young people's risk assessments are comprehensive and take account of changes in young people's risks.	30 April 2020
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b))	30 April 2020
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must — maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37(1) (2)(b))	30 April 2020

Specifically, ensure that all detail relevant to children's admissions and discharges is appropriately recorded.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff — understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ix)) Specifically, staff to understand the impact of neglect on young people's behaviours and use appropriate language to label these behaviours. It also refers to ensuring young people are supported to have positive relationships with other young people in the home.	07 March 2021
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— manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(b)) Specifically, ensuring that young people are provided with adequate supervision to intercept potential bullying incidents that may occur. To manage these incidents in a way which	07 March 2021

prevents further reoccurrence and keeps young people safe from harm.	
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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)) Specifically, ensuring staff are aware of the homes procedures to appropriately respond to allegations of abuse.	07 March 2021
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(d)) Specifically, ensuring there is enough staff meet the complex needs of young people currently living in the home. Additionally, to ensure that staff can provide the appropriate supervision and support in line with young people's plans.	07 March 2021
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises. (Regulation 21 (b)) Specifically, ensuring young people have free access to all communal areas in their home.	07 March 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of children. The home will, in most cases, be a homely, domestic environment. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC061810

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: Cheryl Athersmith

Inspector

Natalie Bennett, 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 2021