

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	08/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC398253
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	North Lakes Children's Services Limited
Registered provider address	Rayrigg Show Rooms, Rayrigg Road, Windermere LA23 3DN

Responsible individual	Craig Smith
Registered manager	Michael Dodd
Inspector	Charlie Bamber

Inspection date	08/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has declined in effectiveness. Young people at the home have become increasingly unsettled since the previous inspection. Their personal circumstances, frustrations about being looked after, and complex health and emotional needs are having an impact on their day-to-day lives, and contribute to a significant increase in challenging behaviour and safeguarding incidents. The young people sometimes escalate each other's behaviours and become involved in incidents which lead to periods of chaos in the home. Their progress and experiences are hindered by frequent episodes of disruption and negative behaviour directed towards staff and each other. Staff spend significant amounts of time in containing and managing behaviour, which detracts from them spending time more positively with young people and supporting their progress and development. There has only been one admission to the home since the last full inspection. The young person was admitted before other young people's behaviours escalated to such a point that an admission would be inadvisable. Due to the heightened behaviours of the other young people in the home, his placement has not had a positive start. However, the significant issue for this young person was education refusal, and since being placed his attendance at education has been good. The admission was well planned and carefully matched. There have been some very serious safeguarding incidents for young people, including two serious suicide attempts. Other incidents concern allegations of sexually inappropriate behaviours which have required investigation by the police and a number of missing from home episodes. Although incidents and risks have increased, the home's risk management remains a strength. Staff and managers have at times gone above and beyond expectations to safeguard young people, including putting themselves at risk to keep young people safe. Risk assessments have been maintained to a high standard and are shared, along with behaviour management plans, with placing authorities. This meets a requirement made at the previous inspection. Missing from home records have been improved and young people's individual missing from home plans are highly detailed. Social media and internet safety have been the cause of a number of serious	

incidents. The home previously had computer safety settings in place, although these have been strengthened and improved. Staff can now control individual young people's access to the internet through their devices, and also make very frequent media checks to maintain young people's safety while continuing to allow them access to social media and the internet.

Access to free time has also been problematic for some young people, and this has been withdrawn and is gradually being reintroduced as young people engage in work to reduce their risks and better understand how to keep themselves safe. For other young people, free time poses an unacceptable risk at present and is therefore not permitted, with the agreement of all stakeholders.

Where very serious safeguarding incidents have occurred, the home has met with a multi-agency group to discuss the young person's safety and placement. The managers understand when young people are not making good progress and reviews the suitability of the placement to meet the young people's needs. They also show high levels of commitment to young people, including through times when they struggle to self-regulate, and staff do not give up easily when young people show increasingly challenging behaviour.

Restrictive physical interventions have increased in line with the incidents of challenging behaviour. Although physical intervention is used appropriately, there have not always been opportunities for staff and young people to have discussions about the intervention afterwards. Additionally, the manager has not reviewed all interventions. This is accounted for by the manager frequently being drawn away from managerial tasks to help staff on shift manage the boys' behaviour.

Although the home is fully staffed, some staff have had to take unexpected leave and this has resulted in key staff being absent from the home. This has meant that the manager, head of care and staff from the company's other homes have had to step in and cover care shifts to maintain the appropriate staffing levels. While the staff team is strong, experienced and resilient, the issues facing the home, alongside the absence of some members of staff, do have an impact both on the staff team and the young people.

The manager is well aware of the current difficulties the home is experiencing. The manager acknowledges that the focus of all staff has been on maintaining the safety of the young people and on occupying them through activities and one-to-one time. This has resulted in recording not being prioritised to its usual level. The manager's monitoring records are not up to date, supervision sessions have not been completed in line with the stated frequency and nor have key-worker sessions or young people's meetings. The manager does, however, maintain strong oversight of the home and provides a very good level of support to the staff team. The deficits in recording do not, in the main, impact on young people's progress or experiences. However, the frequency of key-worker sessions and young people's meetings was raised as an issue at the last inspection and is repeated as a requirement at this inspection.

The home works in partnership with external agencies. Staff maintain good levels of communication with social workers and are developing strong links with the local police.

A requirement was made at the last inspection regarding the standard of furnishings and cleanliness. This has been addressed and all young people now have bespoke shelving units in their rooms and each room is deep-cleaned regularly.

The judgement of declined effectiveness at this interim inspection reflects a highly challenging time for the residents and staff at the home. Although strong relationships and robust safeguarding practices are evident, the progress and experiences of young people have faltered since the last full inspection when the home was much more settled.

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider and is registered for five young people who may have learning disabilities and/or emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/09/2016	Full	Good
16/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
12/01/2016	Full	Good
16/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 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 registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person has spoken to the user about the measure and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; (c) within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person adds to the record that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(c))	08/03/2017
In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard the registered person must ensure that children receive care from staff who take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular this relates to ensuring that children have recorded key-worker sessions and young people's meetings at the stated frequency. (Regulation 7 (1)(c))	12/04/2017

Recommendations

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

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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 the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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