

SC416599

Registered provider: North Lakes Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children of the same gender. It is owned and operated by a private company. It is registered to care for children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 June 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 29 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- Managers and staff have a good understanding of young people's needs and the support required to keep each young person safe.
- Managers and staff understand the risks to young people's safety and well-being and take appropriate action to protect them from harm.
- Clear safeguarding procedures mean that any safeguarding concerns are responded to promptly and in an appropriate way.
- Young people receive positive support to manage their behaviours. The staff team's consistent approach means that crisis incidents are few and far between.
- Young people, their parents and external professionals provide consistently positive feedback about the care and support provided.
- Young people experience positive outcomes and benefit from stable placements.
- Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff and each other.
- Managers and staff ensure that young people are provided with support to maintain important relationships with family and friends.
- Managers and staff understand the importance of education and ensure each young person receives individualised support to engage in education.
- Young people have the opportunity to take part in fun and fulfilling activities. Their hobbies and talents are recognised and encouraged.
- Managers and staff carefully consider the support required by young people moving towards independence and ensure that they are assisted to develop the necessary skills to succeed.
- The home benefits from good leadership. Managers are committed to ensuring that young people are provided with a high standard of care and experience positive outcomes.
- Young people receive their care from a consistent staff team that is well trained and well supported.

- Managers are committed to continual development. Effective quality monitoring systems mean the service is constantly improving.

The children's home's areas for development

- Where young people raise personal issues during house meetings, these should be followed up with individual direct work, so the young people are aware they have been properly considered.
- Processes to ensure that all staff are aware of changes to young people's risk assessments should be reviewed to ensure they are effective.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/03/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
16/11/2016	Full	Good
03/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/11/2015	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- In some instances, a child may express wishes that are not always in their best interests or which may conflict with the views of other children in the home. In such circumstances, the responsible adults will have to balance the wishes of the child against what they judge to be in the best interests of the child and reach a reasonable view about the best way forward in the interests of all. The reasons for reaching any decision will need to be carefully explained to and understood by the child or children concerned. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.9)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people who live at this home receive a good standard of individualised care and experience positive outcomes as a result. Parents, external professionals and young people themselves speak highly of the care and support provided. A parent commented, 'I could not ask for anything more. I am more than happy.'

Young people spoke positively about daily life at the home and described good relationships with staff and each other. One young person said, 'I think things are good here. Everyone gets on.'

Young people are encouraged to share their views about their individual care and about the running of the home. When they do express views or make requests, the staff team ensures they are listened to and fully considered. A number of examples of positive responses from staff to young people's requests, around activities for example, were evident. However, others could have been better evidenced, for instance through follow-up direct work. A recommendation has been made to that effect.

Young people are aware of the purpose of external advocates and some have been supported to access them. This helps ensure that young people are able to influence outcomes that are important to them. Enabling young people to express themselves, and listening when they do, lets them know that they are valued and that their opinions

matter.

The staff team is stable and there has been no turnover since the last inspection. This means that young people have the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with staff and receive their support from people who understand their needs and know them well.

Staff strongly support young people to maintain important relationships. Contact arrangements are carefully considered for all young people and clear arrangements are in place. For example, plans are in place to accommodate a staff member in a hotel near to one young person's family, to enable the young person to safely trial overnight contact for the first time in several years. This is a very positive step forward for the young person. The organisation also exceeds minimum expectations in that it gives an undertaking in its statement of purpose to provide financial assistance for visits from the families of those young people accommodated a significant distance from their home area. This demonstrates that the organisation recognises the importance of supporting young people's important relationships and how this affects their emotional well-being.

Positive friendships are also well supported. One young person was recently invited to bring his college friends along on a day out to a theme park. Other young people have been actively encouraged to join local youth and sports clubs to assist them in making friends in the area.

Young people who live in the home have experienced positive outcomes in education. One young person recently attained a number of GCSEs and is currently sitting his AS levels. He has recently decided that he would like to attend a college instead of his current sixth form, and has been closely supported by staff to select a suitable course. All young people achieve regular attendance and are making good progress at school. Records demonstrate close liaison between the home and education staff, which helps ensure that young people receive ongoing individualised support to engage in education.

Staff support young people to engage in positive activities. Young people describe taking part in regular fun activities, such as visiting theme parks, going to concerts and shows and various sports pursuits. One young person spoke enthusiastically about how he and other young people had taken part, with staff, in a recent sporting mud challenge. He said they had all very much enjoyed this and he was already looking forward to the next one. Another young person is very pleased to have passed his driving theory test and has started driving lessons.

Young people's valued hobbies are supported and their talents are recognised and encouraged. For example, a staff member has initiated discussions with football teams in the area on behalf of one of the young people, who is a gifted player. Encouraging young people to take part in positive activities promotes their opportunities to have fun, achieve and develop their confidence.

Young people's good health is consistently promoted due to the support they receive. Each young person has an individualised healthcare plan in place, which addresses their

routine healthcare needs and details any specific support required around individual health conditions. Young people's healthcare planning is overseen by a registered healthcare professional to ensure it is effective. The healthcare professional demonstrated a good understanding of individual young people's needs. For example, she was able to discuss measures that are in place to safeguard one young person who has a low appetite and is prescribed medication that can exacerbate this. External healthcare professionals have recently complimented the staff on the support they provided to one young person following a serious injury which required physiotherapy. Due to the good level of support provided by staff to assist the young person in completing his physiotherapy exercises, he has made an excellent recovery.

One young person is in the process of making plans to move on to semi-independent living. Very positive work is being done with the young person; this work is ongoing and is being coordinated by his key worker. In partnership with the young person's social worker, staff have developed a very detailed independence plan, which is reviewed on a weekly basis. The plan is designed to assist the young person to develop the skills he will require to live independently. A social worker was very complimentary about this aspect of the young person's support. An agreement has been reached for the young person's key worker to continue to support him on an outreach basis while he adapts to his new living arrangements. This will mean the young person benefits from consistency and support from someone he knows well. The young person was very pleased about this plan and said he felt very confident about the future.

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

Young people receive care and support that helps to keep them safe. Young people feel safe and express confidence in the staff team. One young person said, 'I feel very safe living here. I know they [the staff] will do everything to look after me.'

Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the risks to individual young people in their care. Risks are clearly identified and understood. Staff are able to confidently describe the measures that are in place to maintain young people's safety and well-being. Effective risk assessment and care planning mean that staff are consistently able to take prompt action to protect young people when required.

Staff regularly review risk assessments in line with any relevant changes or new information. This means that young people's changing needs and circumstances are taken into account. However, it was identified during the inspection that the process for ensuring all staff are fully aware of the contents of updated risk assessments required some improvement. A recommendation has been made to this effect.

Examples of recent work carried out with young people demonstrate that staff take prompt and effective action when new risks are identified. Such examples include that of a young person who had recently been involved for the first time in some potentially harmful behaviour. The manager and staff quickly reviewed the young person's care and sought the involvement of external professionals to offer some targeted, educational

work. The young person engaged in this in a very positive way.

A requirement in relation to safeguarding practice was made following the last inspection of the home. This related to the reporting of safeguarding concerns in the organisation. As a result, the procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns have been reviewed and improved to ensure that any such concerns receive a prompt and effective response.

All staff receive safeguarding training at the start of their employment; this is regularly updated. Staff are clear about their role in and responsibility for keeping young people safe and the action they must take if a safeguarding concern is identified. Ensuring that all staff are confident in safeguarding practice helps to protect young people because concerns are recognised and responded to immediately.

Courses such as safeguarding young people who are missing and supporting young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation are mandatory elements of the training programme. This helps staff to develop the knowledge and understanding required to keep young people safe. Staff work positively with external agencies to ensure a coordinated response to any safety concerns about a young person.

Young people are supported to develop safe and acceptable behaviour. There are clear boundaries in place and mutually agreed expectations. Young people are encouraged to share their views about appropriate responses from staff, for example when consequences are put in place. The use of consequences is not excessive in either frequency or severity. The manager has identified that there could be greater consistency in their use and is in the process of working with the staff in relation to this.

Each young person has an individualised plan in place to help staff understand their emotional responses and the strategies they should employ to support the young person in times of crisis. This clear planning helps staff to adopt a consistent approach and focus on de-escalation. The low number of incidents that reach crisis point demonstrates that staff use de-escalations techniques well.

Robust recruitment processes mean that all prospective employees are required to undergo a number of background checks before they are able to take up their posts. This helps to safeguard young people as it reduces the risk of them being exposed to people of unsuitable character.

Young people are provided with safe and secure accommodation. Frequent health and safety checks help to ensure that any safety issues are quickly identified and addressed. All maintenance work is attended to promptly and, where appropriate, advice from external specialists is followed. For example, the manager promptly implemented several good-practice recommendations that were recently made by the local fire service. This proactive approach to environmental safety helps to protect young people's health and safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home benefits from the leadership of a suitably experienced manager who, at the time of the inspection, was in the final stages of registration. The manager demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring the best outcomes for young people and communicates clear expectations of high standards of care.

Previously, the organisation has experienced disruption within the senior management team. In line with a requirement made at the last inspection, a new responsible individual, who is able to demonstrate the appropriate skills and experience to supervise the management of the home, has now been appointed. The manager reports an excellent level of support from him. She also confirms that she is provided with adequate resources to run the home in a safe and effective manner.

The home has a clear statement of purpose in place, which is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure it reflects the aims and objectives of the service provided. Procedures are now in place to ensure that HMCI is provided with the statement of purpose following any changes. This addresses a requirement made following the home's last inspection.

People involved with the service, such as parents of young people and community professionals, express satisfaction with the home's management. They speak highly of the service provided and describe good levels of communication. A social worker of one young person commented, 'I have a great deal of confidence in them to meet [x]'s needs. They always take time to do things properly.'

Significant improvements have been made in respect of how quality and safety across the home is monitored. A number of new processes, for example, care plan audits and analysis of young people's key-worker sessions, have been implemented. The improved quality assurance system enables the manager to continually assess young people's progress, and has resulted in good overall improvements in areas such as care planning and record-keeping.

There are clear lines of accountability throughout the staff and management team. The manager sets clear expectations for staff and provides ongoing support and guidance. The staff team demonstrates pride in the service and confidence in the management team. One staff member commented, 'I think we have a really good sense of what we want to achieve for the young people and everyone is working towards that.'

Staff express satisfaction with the level of support they receive. They describe the manager as very approachable and always available to provide guidance when needed. Staff confirm that they benefit from regular supervision, which they find helpful. Two staff members described their recent appraisals, commenting that they had found these to be very positive experiences which would be helpful in their personal development.

The manager has created a supportive environment for staff, who reported a positive culture within which their views are welcomed. At the time of the inspection, a team meeting took place, which was attended by all staff. There has been no turnover of staff

at this home since the last inspection. This means that young people receive their care from a stable staff team that they are familiar with.

All staff report positive developments over recent months. They described a number of improvements and confirmed they had been consulted about the changes made. A consultation process was ongoing at the time of the inspection in relation to approaches used when supporting young people on a day-to-day basis.

A comprehensive training programme means that staff are supported to develop their skills, knowledge and practice in a confident and consistent manner. The training programme is regularly reviewed to ensure it reflects young people's needs. All staff are supported to complete nationally recognised qualifications and all those working at a supervisory level, such as senior support workers, are in the process of obtaining their leadership and management awards. This positive approach to training helps to ensure that young people receive their care from confident and competent staff.

The management team demonstrates a clear understanding of the strengths of the home as well as areas for development. A number of requirements and recommendations were made following the home's last inspection. It was confirmed during this inspection that these have been addressed. The manager carefully monitors adverse incidents, such as accidents or complaints, to ensure that any potential learning is identified and actioned.

There are processes in place to enable managers to monitor safety and quality across the home. Since the last inspection, these have been reviewed and improved. For example, they now encompass additional areas such as the frequency and quality of direct work with young people. A development plan is in place and it is regularly evaluated to ensure its effectiveness. This means that young people benefit from a constantly improving service.

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 difference 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 who 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: SC416599

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: North Lakes Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Rayrigg Show Rooms, Rayrigg Road, Windermere LA23 3DN

Responsible individual: Paul Jenkinson

Registered manager: Marie Friel

Inspectors

Marie Cordingley: social care inspector

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