

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC416599
Inspector	Gillian Walters
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	North Lakes Children's Services Limited
Registered person address	Kirby Moor School Longtown Road Brampton Cumbria CA8 2AB
Responsible individual	Anthony Middleton
Registered manager	VACANT
Date of last inspection	13/06/2014

Inspection date	23/03/2015
Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged adequate at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

The home has experienced considerable change since it was last inspected on 13 June 2014. The Registered Manager's performance was challenged and he resigned his position in September 2014, in part due to his failure to address repeated issues raised as a result of the home's external monitoring process. Lack of attention to these issues, that were mainly in relation to recording and reporting shortfalls, impacted on the overall effectiveness of the external monitoring process.

The provider promptly put in place suitable temporary management arrangements and addressed shortfalls in practice to ensure the smooth running of the home. A permanent manager was appointed in February 2015 and he has since made application to become the home's Registered Manager. He is qualified in working with children and young people and suitably experienced, having worked as a deputy manager in one of the organisation's other homes. He is currently working towards his Level 5 diploma in Leadership and Management to achieve suitable qualification for his new role.

The home was temporarily closed between December 2014 and February 2015 for refurbishment. In response to a recommendation made at the last inspection the provider reviewed the potential risks identified as a result of the home's location assessment. The home re-opened on 22 February 2015 having advised and provided Ofsted with a revised Statement of Purpose, changing their remit to care for young males rather than females. This was in recognition that the location carried an increased risk for females that had the potential to be exploited.

During the summer months the home had successfully supported one young person's move back to her home area to attend college and live independently. This had been a successful long-term placement that ended in a well-planned and supported move for the young person who had achieved a considerable range of

independence skills prior to leaving the home. As such, she was well prepared and supported to make a successful transition to adulthood.

In early December 2014, Ofsted was notified by the home that two remaining young people had made numerous allegations about staff that worked at the home and the provider's school. Although these were quickly retracted by the young people, who later stated to police that it was all a joke, the home took the view that the placements could not successfully continue, given the nature of the allegations made. For this reason the home terminated both placements and ensured the young people were well supported and prepared for their moves to new placements.

During this period the provider acted appropriately, prioritising young people's safety and ensuring the matter was appropriately investigated and managed in partnership with the police, the local authority and placing authority. Ofsted was kept suitably informed by the provider, ensuring that the home was transparent in its activity. Staff remained professional during this period, ensuring that young people's needs were supported and that their safety remained paramount.

Young people were supported to understand the consequences of their actions without blame or recrimination enabling them to retain positive relationships with staff before their move. Those young people have since maintained some telephone contact with their key workers to keep staff updated of their progress. This has afforded those young people the opportunity to express their appreciation for the care and support provided; rebuilding some self-esteem that was damaged as a result of their actions.

The home has been refurbished to provide each young person's bedroom with en suite facilities or private access to a bathroom. This further promotes young people's privacy within the home. The property has also benefited from considerable re-decoration and new furniture and soft furnishings to upgrade young people's bedrooms and living space to create a comfortable and homely environment.

Recent placements have been made from one of the organisation's other homes. Young people have benefited from comprehensive planning that has supported their move to a new environment. Young people are settled, feel safe and are enjoying life at their new home. They have engaged positively in personalising their own rooms, choosing items and pictures that reflect their own unique identity. Young people engage positively with staff and have quickly developed good and meaningful relationships. As such they feel trust in staff and confidence in the care they receive. Young people have good opportunities for fun and exercise, participating in the many activities the home organises. These include activities such as rugby, football and ice skating. One young person commented, 'I like going out on activities. I can do anything I want but not like dangerous stuff.'

At the last inspection two requirements were made to address shortfalls in the home's pre-admission process and guidance available to staff. These have both been

suitably addressed resulting in changes to the home's referral process that ensures full and comprehensive information is secured in advance of placements to assist the matching process. This is effective in reducing the likelihood of placing young people that are incompatible or likely to negatively impact on other young people already living in the home.

Further guidance has been issued to staff to ensure that they are aware of not only the actions to take should a young person go missing but also the steps that they can take to prevent and reduce such occasions. This ensures young people are suitably supported to avoid situations that may increase their vulnerability and compromise their safety. The home has previous experience of dealing with such situations and works closely with local police ensuring young people are located as soon as possible and returned to the safety of the home. Young people are not currently engaged in such risk-taking activity; there have been no recent incidents since the home re-opened.

Two further good practice recommendations were also made as a result of the last inspection and these too have been acted upon. The home has improved the quality of young people's records, ensuring that written records provide a clear and accurate reflection of young people's activity and experience within the home. The home is now routinely providing Ofsted with comprehensive information concerning any significant events that occur in relation to young people or the home. This improves the quality of the information that is shared with Ofsted and promotes transparency.

Information about this children's home

This five-bedded children's home is one of four run by a limited company. It is registered for five males, with emotional and behavioural problems. Education is provided in a purpose-built school on one of the company's other sites.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/06/2014	Full	adequate
12/02/2014	Interim	good progress
24/05/2013	Full	good
18/03/2013	Interim	good progress

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure the registered person takes action to address any issues of concern that they identify or which is raised with them. (NMS 21.9)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections 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

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.