

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	14/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC457254
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	Caroline Rae
Inspector	Charlie Bamber

Inspection date	14/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
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 outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness. Young people at this home have made mixed progress since the last full inspection. Two placement breakdowns have occurred due to young people disengaging from education, not making progress, and involving themselves in negative behaviours. Despite the placements breaking down, the home has made every effort to ensure that placement endings have been as positive as possible, and has celebrated the achievements and progress the young people have made throughout their placements. Staff make every effort to prepare young people for planned transitions back to their home areas. Where placing authorities are less proactive in their planning, the home advocates strongly on the young person's behalf to ensure that plans and preparations are in place. Where there are serious concerns about the actions of a placing authority, the home has made complaints on the young person's behalf. Young people admitted to the home have struggled to settle and adjust to their new placement. The loss of some staff, who young people had formed good relationships with, has also impacted on their experience of the placement. Newly admitted young people, despite having well-planned transitions and being familiar with the staff and young people at the home, have become unsettled and show challenging behaviours. They are influenced by others and have become involved in negative behaviours at school, and also have been missing from the home, issues which were not apparent prior to placement. Some young people are struggling with behaviour and progress in education. Attendance at the school provision continues to be good, but there are frequent episodes of challenging behaviour reported to the home by the school. The home maintains a good level of communication with staff at school and supports learning in the home. From the point of placement, one young person continues to make exceptional progress in all areas. His specific needs are well understood by the staff team and he is increasingly able to integrate, socialise and has become a valued member of the home. His progress is rooted in the positive relationships staff have developed with him and their advanced knowledge of how to manage and get the best out of him. He thrives on the high level of attention he receives and enjoys participating	

in specific activities with individual staff.

There has been an increase in the number of serious and significant incidents for young people. Missing from home episodes have increased, and one young person assaulted, and has made further serious threats to, another pupil at school. One young person has been the subject of a violent assault by a former resident of the home and, although the home acted appropriately to support him through this, this has had an impact on his confidence and cannot go out in the community alone. This setback to the young person's independence is particularly significant because of his forthcoming planned transition back to his home area and semi-independent living. The home continues to have a positive and proactive response to safeguarding issues that arise, supporting young people well and maintaining records of a very high standard.

A number of staff have left the home and efforts to recruit new staff have had no lasting impact on alleviating the staffing shortages. The home maintains appropriate staffing levels at all times, and provides continuity to the young people by ensuring that all shifts are covered by familiar staff. While this shows great commitment to the young people, it is not sustainable in the longer term. Staff are highly experienced and are all qualified to diploma level 3 or above. The staff team (except one member of night staff) is currently all female, while the young people are all male. This does not provide an appropriate gender balance and does not address the young people's need for positive male role models.

Recording and monitoring in the home continue to be of a very high standard. The manager has a good understanding of the young people and of the home's strengths and weaknesses. Issues raised at this inspection had already been identified and the manager works hard to address current concerns around recruitment of suitable permanent staff and young people's progress. Additionally, the manager is working to include staff views relating to the development of the home, which increases their inclusion and motivation to develop and improve.

While the manager shows an exceptional level of commitment to the home and to maintaining high standards of care, she is not receiving supervision in line with the stated frequency, having had only one supervision session since the last full inspection. Neither has she had an annual appraisal, resulting in a requirement being made.

A new responsible individual has been nominated. It is currently unclear whether the responsible individual has the necessary experience and skills to supervise the management of the home.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide accommodation and care for up to five young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning difficulties. It is one of four homes owned by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/10/2016	Full	Outstanding
08/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/07/2015	Full	Outstanding
23/03/2015	Interim	Improved 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 all employees— (b) receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and (c) have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 32 (4))	15/06/2017
A responsible individual must have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated. (Regulation 26 (7)(b))	15/05/2017

Recommendations

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

- Whenever possible, staff in day-to-day contact with children should include staff from the different gender groups. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 10.22, page 54)

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 that 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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