

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC446003
Inspector	Mandy Williams
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Carlisle Mencap Ltd
Registered person address	Suite 2 Regents Court, Kingmoor Business Park CARLISLE CA6 4SJ
Responsible individual	Sheila Gregory
Registered manager	POST VACANT
Date of last inspection	25/03/2014

Inspection date	31/01/2015
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Young people who stay at this short break service often have complex health and developmental needs.

Staff manage these needs well and demonstrate a commitment to the young people that they care for.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with the staff. Social workers and parents report that young people are eager to attend and that they indicate that they feel safe while away from their families.

Young people make good progress across all areas of their development. They are able to engage in a range of activities and learn new skills during their stay. Young people have also learnt to socialise with their peers and make new friends. A real improvement in young people's self-esteem is evident.

Outcomes for young people using this service are positive. Staff demonstrate a real commitment to improving their life chances and providing invaluable support to young people's families. Young people make the most of the opportunities available to them during their time here.

Five requirements and four good practice recommendations have been raised as a result of this inspection.

These largely relate to weaknesses in the management functions in the setting. Managers have concentrated their efforts on the delivery of care to young people but have neglected some of their duties associated with the management of the home. There is a new manager in the home who is appreciative of the areas for development and demonstrates a desire to address the shortfalls identified.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This four bedded children's home is run by a registered charity and provides short breaks care for children and young people with physical and/or learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/03/2014	Interim	good progress
25/06/2013	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
5 (2001)	ensure that the Statement of Purpose is kept under review and revised where appropriate; and that the HMCI is notified of any revision within 28 days (Regulation 5(a)(b))	06/03/2015
16 (2001)	ensure that the policies and procedures designed to safeguard young people are adhered to; with particular reference to prompt referral to the local authority in relation to safeguarding concerns; and the need to maintain detailed records of any safeguarding incidents and any action taken (Regulation 16(2))	06/03/2015
17B (2001)	ensure that the 'behaviour management policy' sets out the measures of control, restraint and discipline which may be used in the children's home; and that this clearly specifies what disciplinary methods must	06/03/2015

	not be used (Regulation 17B(a))	
23 (2001)	ensure that any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably practicable free from avoidable risk; specifically that risk assessments inform any decision to engage in an activity (Regulation 23(b))	06/03/2015
31 (2001)	ensure that an assessment is undertaken, in order to be satisfied that the premises are appropriately and suitable located, so that children are effectively safeguarded and able to access services to meet needs identified in their care plans; and that the registered person consults and takes into account the views of others. (Regulation 31(1A)(1B))	06/03/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home's procedures for when a child is missing from the home are compatible with and have regard to local missing from home protocols maintained and managed by the police for the area where the home is located (NMS 5.6)
- ensure that there is an emergency escape plan that all staff and children are familiar with and have practiced so they know what to do in an emergency; particularly that fire drills that involve children are undertaken regularly, in line with the home's own procedures (NMS 10.9)
- ensure that staff rotas have time scheduled to ensure handovers are held (NMS 17.6)
- ensure that staff are provided with regular supervision; and that this is in accordance with the home's own policy. (NMS 19.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people, who attend this short break service, are happy and settled while away from their families. They have a wide range of additional health and developmental needs. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding about young people's individual needs and requirements. This ensures that they receive a consistency of care while they are resident; enhancing their health and well-being.

Young people benefit from detailed short break care plans. These include clear and agreed objectives, making their stay at the centre purposeful. Young people receive encouragement and support to meet their targets. They have been surprised about what they have been able to achieve. As a result their self-confidence has improved. Young people's targets are routinely reviewed and this helps staff to monitor the progress that they are making. Social workers are positive about the care that young people receive and confirm that young people's outcomes have improved as a result of their attendance. One social worker commented, 'Young people have learnt how to prepare food and wash their own hair as a direct result of attending the centre.'

Young people benefit from opportunities to develop their social skills while at the centre. Staff match the needs of young people attending at any time to ensure that they are compatible. This process is effective and enables young people to form friendships while staying here. One young person said, 'I like staying over with my friend.' Similarly, young people with conflicting needs do not attend together. This ensures that stays at the home are an enjoyable experience for all young people. This also enables parents to enjoy their period of respite, as they are confident that their children are having an enjoyable time at the centre.

Young people enjoy a range of healthy meals and snacks while at the service. Staff consult with young people's families about their dietary needs and food preferences. Fruit is readily available for young people. Young people are encouraged to make their own choices and help to prepare meals during their stay. There is a specially adapted kitchen in the home. This allows for the height of kitchen surfaces and equipment to be altered, ensuring that it is accessible for all.

Young people are able to engage in a wide range of meaningful activities while at the home. There is an outside play area that young people can access under the supervision of staff; an indoor ball pool and soft play area; a sensory room; a computer and arts and crafts facilities. This ensures that young people are stimulated with play activities while on their stay at the home.

Quality of care

good

Warm and positive relationships are evident between staff and young people. The staff team working at the centre has remained largely stable since the last inspection. Many of the staff also have contact with young people using the service in other venues in the community. Thus, enabling young people to get to know the staff and build positive relationships. Young people indicate to their families and social workers that they like the staff and the time they spend with them.

Young people's short break plans clearly outline the young person's needs and their daily routines. These are subject to regular review. As young people do not attend for frequent short breaks, a system is in place for staff on duty to familiarise themselves with these prior to each short break stay. This ensures that staff are up-to-date concerning any changes.

New service users and their families have an opportunity to visit the centre prior to attending for their first short break. This gives them opportunity to ask any questions and become familiar with the setting. Young people receive a copy of the children's guide to the home and are able to get a feeling about what it will be like to stay overnight at the centre. Similarly, those approaching adulthood are suitably prepared for the transition to adult services prior to their 18th birthday. Introductions take place to an adult respite provision, with some staff working across both settings. This helps contribute to a smooth transition.

Young people are encouraged to be involved in the planning of their short break. Young people's meetings are held at the start of each short break, so that young people can contribute to the planning for their stay. Activities and outings are discussed and agreed. Similarly, young people's views are gathered at the conclusion of their stay and these help inform any future stays in the home.

Staff ensure the health needs of young people are prioritised during their stay at the home. Young people have clear health care plans and staff are trained in the safe administration of medication. Medication is safely stored and appropriate records are maintained. Consents to medical treatment are evident. Staff receive specific training so that they are able to undertake specialised medical procedures competently. This ensures that young people's health needs are met during their stay in the home.

Staff appreciate the vulnerability of many of the young people who access the service. They demonstrate a good knowledge of their needs and display a genuine desire to improve their life chances. Staff communicate well with young people, having the skills to communicate with them using a variety of formats. Young people are able to use their preferred method of communication and respond positively to this consistency.

The home is purpose built in order to meet the diverse needs of those accessing the service. It provides good quality accommodation. It is furnished, decorated and

equipped to a high standard, ensuring the participation of those with a range of disabilities. The centre also has its own transport ensuring that all young people are able to engage in activities in the local community.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Staff receive training in safeguarding as part of their induction to the home. They also receive regular refresher training. Policies and procedures support this training. These outline to staff the actions that they need to take if they have any concerns about a child or young person or about the actions of others. However, despite this, young people's records do not consistently illustrate the actions taken by staff or clear decision making processes when issues of concern have arisen.

Young people benefit from clear behaviour management plans that illustrate the most appropriate way to manage their behaviours with the minimum degree of intervention. Staff focus on the promotion of positive behaviour by praising young people or by distracting them from negative behaviour. Young people respond well to this positive and consistent approach. Staff are also trained in the implementation of physical restraint, should they require to use it. However, the homes behaviour management policy does not include sufficient detail of the measures of control, restraint or discipline that it would be acceptable for staff to implement or make it clear which are unacceptable. Although, staff are clear that any form of discipline must be proportional to the needs and understanding of the young person, and only used as a last resort.

A range of risk assessments relating to specific issues for young people are in place. These alert staff to issues for those resident and suggest the most appropriate way for them to manage these. However, risk assessments have not been completed prior to young people engaging in activities in the community. While staff may have discussed the associated risks and put control measures in place, no formal risk assessments have been completed demonstrating that the risks are thought to be manageable.

Safe staff recruitment and selection procedures are in place in the home. Appropriate checks are completed and records maintained. Personal and employer references are sought and appropriately verified. Similarly, visitors to the home are required to sign in the visitors book and asked to produce identification. This ensures that young people are protected from those who may wish to pose them harm.

Young people are cared for in a physically safe environment. They benefit from the completion of regular health and safety checks on the building and safety certifications are in place. However, fire drills involving young people rarely take place, so only a small minority of young people that attend for short breaks have had the opportunity to practice evacuating the building in an emergency. This is despite

the home's own policy stating such evacuations will take place.

Staff are acutely aware of the particular vulnerabilities and diverse needs of the young people that they are caring for. They remain vigilant to the whereabouts of young people at all times, ensuring appropriate supervision. The home is appropriately secure and young people do not go missing from the home. However, staff were not aware of the local police protocol for young people that go missing from home and care. There has been no consultation with the police to ensure that the compatibility of the home's procedures should an incident occur. Similarly, the manager has yet to consult with other bodies in the community and draft a safe area risk assessment in order to be satisfied regarding the suitability of the location of the home.

Leadership and management

adequate

There is a new manager in post in the home, who took up position in November 2014. Ofsted is currently processing her application for registration. She is appropriately experienced and is familiar with the home and young people, as she has worked in the setting for the last two years. The Statement of Purpose and young people's guide clearly outline the aims and objectives of the home. However, the Statement of Purpose has not been revised for some time and does not reflect the current staffing arrangements in the home. A copy is available on the organisations website, ensuring that it is easily accessible for parents and commissioners.

The organisation has a procedure for dealing with complaints. A separate young people's leaflet outlining who they should speak to if they wish to make a complaint is also given to young people on their admission. However, no complaints have been made since the last inspection.

Action has been taken to address the one requirement made at the last interim inspection of the home in March 2014. The homes admission and discharge register now contains all the required details as itemised in the Regulations. The organisation has a development plan in place. This demonstrates that managers have an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. This has a clear focus of improving the support offered to young people and their families. The needs of the families accessing the service are seen as crucial to the home's development.

A wide range of training opportunities are available to staff. The majority of staff have a Level three qualification in caring for children and young people and the remainder are in the process of working towards this. Courses are also available to help staff meet the specific needs of the young people that they are caring for, such as epilepsy and learning difficulties. This ensures that staff are knowledgeable about the implications for the young person. Consequently, systems are in place to equip staff with the skills they require to meet the varying needs of the young people that

they are caring for effectively.

Staff receive supervision from a consistent named supervisor. However, they have not been receiving supervision at the frequency identified in the home's own procedures as appropriate. Staffing rotas reflect the staff on duty in the home and staffing levels in the home are satisfactory. Records indicate that specific staff are allocated to work with individual young people. These indicate who has responsibility for any specific tasks, such as the administration of medication. This ensures that staff on duty are clear about their responsibilities. However, there is currently no specific time allocated for staff to handover between shifts and the manager is reliant on the goodwill of staff, as these take place in staff members own time.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.

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