

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	08/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC446003
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Carlisle Mencap Ltd
Registered person address	Unit J3 Duchess Avenue, Baron Way, Kingmoor Park North, Carlisle, CA6 4SN

Responsible individual	Sheila Gregory
Registered manager	Julie Harrison
Inspector	Gillian Walters

Inspection date	08/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC446003

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- The quality of written risk assessments are variable not consistently detailed to represent the full range of young people's individual risks. This means that staff do not always have sufficient information to guide and inform their practice to help and protect young people
- Staff have not yet achieved consistently good practice in the management and administration of medication to inspire confidence that they can routinely promote the safety of highly vulnerable young people that require prescribed and controlled medication.
- Staff do not consistently receive regular or practice-related supervision from a person with appropriate experience to effectively support and develop them in their roles.
- The home's monitoring arrangements are weak and do not effectively produce good evaluation of the service to identify key areas for development and improvement.
- Staff have not yet developed into a cohesive staff team. They have missed good opportunities to receive further support and guidance and come together as a team to help shape their service.
- Staff demonstrate uncertainty about their responsibilities and accountability in the absence of the Registered Manager. This is significant as the home is operational primarily during hours when the Registered Manager is off duty.
- The home has not yet implemented a clear recording system for complaints to enable effective monitoring of outcomes and how these may inform further improvement of the service.
- The home is not sufficiently transparent in its operation ensuring that Ofsted and other relevant parties are notified when significant events occur. This reduces confidence in the provider.
- The home is not working in accordance with its Statement of Purpose and as such is misleading parents and placing authorities, specifically about the arrangements in place to support staff.

The children's home strengths

- The home is very comfortable and well maintained. It is well equipped to cater for the wide range of young people's individual needs and abilities.
- The home has excellent soft play areas and sensory equipment that positively supports young people's development.
- Staff treat children and young people with great warmth and sensitivity. They show patience and care in supporting children and young people during their short break stays that promotes their safety and well-being.
- Staff show respect young people's privacy and act in a way that promotes their dignity.
- Staff encourage and support young people to enjoy a wide range of activities and outings that promotes confidence and gives them positive opportunities to socialise with peers.
- Staff encourage young people and their parents to contribute to planning to ensure young people's needs are fully explored, understood and catered for during their short break visits.
- Parents and the placing authority are mostly satisfied with the service and speak positively of the support that young people receive.

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>12. In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to understanding and addressing the individual risks of children, the registered person must:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(2)(a) (i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child.</p>	29/02/2016
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>13. In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(2)(a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose.</p>	29/02/2016
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>13. In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to staff attendance at staff team meetings, the registered person must:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(2)(b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate.</p>	29/02/2016
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>13. In order to meet the leadership and management standard,</p>	29/02/2016

<p>the registered person must:</p> <p>(2)(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	
<p>Ensure that medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23(2)(b))</p>	29/02/2016
<p>Ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))</p>	29/02/2016
<p>Ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. This relates specifically to their being a comprehensive record that is accessible to staff. (Regulation 39(3))</p>	29/02/2016
<p>The registered person must notify Ofsted and each other relevant person without delay if there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(3)(e))</p>	29/02/2016
<p>Ensure that the independent person has obtained consent from the child and the child's placing authority to inspect a child's case records. (Regulation 44(2)(b))</p>	29/02/2016
<p>Ensure the independent person's report sets out clearly the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. This relates specifically to including greater evaluation of observations and information gathered. (Regulation 44(4)(a)(b))</p>	29/02/2016

Recommendations

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

- For children who are not looked-after the home should frequently seek the views and involvement of parents/carers and others with a significant relationship to the child as relevant persons in that child's care. This relates specifically to establishing and completing records that inform staff of the child's wishes,

preferences and feelings. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 22 paragraphs 4.8)

- Ensure that the workforce plan details the process and timescales for supervision of practice and that appropriate records are kept in the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53 paragraphs 10.8)
- Ensure there are clear lines of accountability and that clear arrangements are in place to maintain effective management when the manager is absent, off duty or on leave. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 54 paragraphs 10.20)
- Ensure that there are procedures in place for welcoming and introducing each child to the home, and that they are sensitive to the needs of the child at time of arrival. This relates specifically to the planning that takes place before short breaks to ensure staff can focus their time with children, keeping administration and domestic tasks to a minimum. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 57 paragraphs 11.7)

Full report

Information about this children's home

- the home's is registered for up to four children
- the home is owned by a registered charitable organisation
- it may provide care and accommodation for children with physical disabilities (PD) and/or children with learning disabilities (LD)
- all placements are made under short break arrangements and not as a permanent placement.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/03/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
31/01/2015	CH - Full	Adequate
25/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
25/06/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>requires improvement</p>
<p>Despite the number of shortfalls identified in the effectiveness of the leadership and management of this home, there are no serious widespread failures that overall compromise young people’s safety or well-being while accessing the service.</p> <p>The home operates on a very limited basis, providing short breaks to young people during two weekends each month and one midweek night on two occasions per month. The home is purpose built and very well equipped to meet the unique and diverse needs of those that receive short breaks. The home provides good facilities for those young people with sensory needs and has the necessary equipment to safely manage those that are less physically able. Many young people enjoy spending time in the home’s soft play area and a large well-equipped sensory room. These both provide excellent opportunities for fun and stimulation that successfully promotes their development and range of experience.</p> <p>The staff team engaged in supporting young people during their short breaks can be variable as staff have a range of other roles within the organisation. For example, some also work within the organisation’s adult short break provision and additionally provide outreach support to both young people and adults with learning disabilities. Consequently, there are some constraints on the organisation in providing continuity of carers. However, the service aims to minimise this ensuring that there is small core group of staff fully familiar with the small number of young people currently using the service.</p> <p>Staff generally make suitable arrangements to familiarise themselves with children’s plans and assessments prior to visits to ensure that they have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the young people they are caring for. Staff encourage young people and their family members contribute to their short break plans ensuring that these are sufficiently detailed to address the full range of their needs and identify the specific support they require.</p> <p>Staff also attempt to learn more about young people’s preferences, wishes, and feelings to ensure their voice is heard and their experience while in the home is maximised. While this is effective for those that have been using the service for some time, such information is not consistently recorded for all young people, especially those who have more recently started accessing the service. Other professionals, such as teachers and those in other support services that have a good knowledge of those young people are not routinely consulted to assist in the</p>	

initial process of collating information. Some young people's records are therefore incomplete and are of limited value to the staff supporting them.

Staff are warm in their approach and show considerable patience and sensitivity in supporting young people that have a wide range of needs and abilities. For example, personal care tasks are carried out away from other young people and staff not directly involved. This ensures that their right to privacy is supported and their personal dignity preserved.

Staff show considerable commitment to providing young people with an enjoyable experience during their short break stays. Where appropriate, young people are consulted directly about their preferences. For example, their choice of room, meals and activities and outings that they would like to participate in. This promotes young people's participation in arranging how their care is delivered and ensures their enjoyment throughout their stay is maximised.

Staff encourage and support young people to access local clubs, places of interest and activities. These provide fun and good opportunities that enable them to socialise with peer and feel part of their community. Staff additionally support those that are more able and interested to help with household tasks such as meal preparation and baking. This is very effective in helping some young people to learn and practice new skills that will be of value as they move towards adulthood.

Staff quickly develop a good rapport with young people. They show skill in using a range of communication systems and techniques with those that have significant communication difficulties. Staff successfully promote young people's feelings of comfort and safety, enabling them to settle quickly in to the home environment.

The home prioritises young people's health, ensuring that sufficient information is available about young people's current health and well-being and any long-term conditions they may have. Staff are familiar with young people's individual health care plans and the personalised protocols that exist for emergency treatment of some young people's conditions. These measures effectively help to promote their health and safety.

Staff understand the importance of safely managing and administering medication and receive regular instruction and training about this matter. However, the home has identified two occasions since the last inspection when administration errors have occurred. Despite further training and the implementation of improved arrangements after the first error was made, a second also occurred. Although immediate professional advice was sought in both cases and confirmation received that the errors would have no negative impact on the young person, they demonstrate that the home has not as yet secured consistently good practice in the safe administration of medication.

Parents and social workers comment positively on the service provided, identifying

it as a valued resource that is successful in supporting both young people and their families. One parent said, 'Staff know what to do; they are confident. I gave them information about my son and they factored that into their planning. He coped really well. I felt like nothing was too much trouble. He doesn't usually interact with other children, so this is a positive step towards his socialisation with peers and other adults. I am quite positive about the whole experience.' A local authority professional also was complimentary of the service commenting, 'They seem to be working well. Generally social workers are fairly impressed and children settle well.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
<p>Staff provide young people with a high level of supervision, encouragement and support that successfully promotes their feelings of safety and well-being during short breaks. They regularly offer young people reassurance throughout activities, to help their understanding of what is happening. For example, when a young person is moved with the assistance of a hoist, staff talk calmly explaining exactly what they are doing to lessen the likelihood of anxiety and distress. This helps to promote their feelings of confidence in staff and their surroundings.</p> <p>Staff appreciate the considerable vulnerability of the young people that access the service. They are informed by a range of generic assessments intended to keep young people safe when in the home and when enjoying activities in the community.</p> <p>The quality of young people's documented individual risk assessments are variable with some less detailed and comprehensive than others. Some aspects of young people's individual assessments provide excellent detail. For example, where individual moving and handling arrangements are addressed, staff benefit from clearly documented plans that assist staff step-by-step to understand the risks and how these should be safely managed.</p> <p>However, the home tends to rely on the high level of staff support and close supervision as mitigating some risks. This results in some written assessments being less detailed and helpful in directing staff support and action. For example, current documentation does not address the specific risks and actions required for individual young people in relation to a number of issues. These include the risk of self-harm and of going missing. Despite practicing evacuation of the building with young people and making sure that they are aware of the many escape routes,</p>	

staff acknowledge that some find the fire alarm disturbing, causing them considerable anxiety. Staff express reduced confidence in predicting how those young people may act in the event of a real emergency and what additional support they may require. The existing individual fire evacuation plans fall short in providing sufficient clarity in some cases and addressing staff concern. Overall risk assessments are not consistently robust to be confident that staff have clear and sufficient guidance to support them in their role.

There have not been any instances of young people going missing from this home. However, young people's individual risks and behaviour management plans are not sufficiently detailed to ensure staff have clear and consistent guidance. This is particularly pertinent in ensuring staff know how to effectively protect young people when out in their community, especially as many are known to have little or no understanding of road safety or other dangers that exist.

Staff are well trained in child protection and have a good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of child protection and safeguarding issues. Their knowledge combined with their experience of working with a range of young people and adults with learning and physical disabilities means that they are acutely aware of their particular vulnerabilities and especially vigilant to ensure they are protected from victimisation and abuse.

The organisation's processes for recruitment and selection of staff are robust. The home is appropriately secure to ensure that it cannot be entered by anyone without appropriate authorisation. Staff ensure that all visitors to the home are appropriately checked and have a valid reason for being there. These measures together work to effectively protect young people from adults that may cause them harm.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
<p>The home's Registered Manager is appropriately qualified and has good experience in working with young people with a range of complex needs and learning disabilities. She worked in the home as a team leader prior to becoming manager and registering with Ofsted. She also possesses a teaching qualification. She is committed to maintaining her own professional development and is currently working towards her level 5 qualification in leadership and management.</p> <p>The effectiveness of leaders and managers is judged to be inadequate and impacts on the overall judgement that this home can achieve at this time. This is due to a number of shortfalls identified during this inspection that primarily rest with</p>	

leadership and management arrangements. Additionally, some of these shortfalls were also identified at the last inspection. This demonstrates that managers have not taken sufficient action to remedy issues that promote improvement in the home's operation.

Staff have not made sufficient improvements in their practice surrounding the management of medication. Despite further training and new arrangements intended to improve the safety of medication management, further errors in administration of medication have occurred. This escalates some concern as the issues identified at the last inspection focused solely on recording errors.

Staff do not routinely receive supervision on a regular basis in accordance with the organisation's policy or as stated in the home's Statement of Purpose. When they do, it is often by other managers in other parts of the organisation not directly associated with this short break service. The organisation's arrangements require managers, including the Registered Manager of this service, to have supervisory responsibilities across the range of the organisation's activities. Consequently, staff cannot be guaranteed to receive support from a manager with the relevant knowledge and experience of operating short break children's home service.

Shortfalls in supervision and arrangements were previously identified as a concern. These arrangements and shortfalls impact negatively on the Registered Manager's ability to effectively monitor and evaluate her individual staff's performance and professional development.

Although the Registered Manager arranges regular staff meetings, these are not as yet well established. Staff have not attended a significant number of meetings and the organisation has been slow to act to remedy this. The reasons for their absences at planned meetings are unclear but it has been suggested that this in part may be associated with conflicting priorities concerning staff working in other roles within the organisation. This compounds concern that staff are not receiving good management support or being led in a manner that is constructive in developing and improving the service they provide.

Some staff acknowledge there are issues surrounding the preparation for young people's short breaks that could be improved. These include administrative and domestic tasks that need only some limited support to enable them to fully focus on young people as they arrive in the home. As the organisation has not consolidated arrangements for staff to work as a team, these issues are not proactively addressed and remain unresolved.

The home is not yet consistently operating in a manner that ensures Ofsted and all other relevant parties are notified when an event occurs that is deemed to be serious. For some relevant parties this reduces confidence in the service and does not promote transparency with Ofsted or those that should be kept informed.

Staff indicate some awareness of the management processes that exist but acknowledge that they have not received instruction or advice on fulfilling such tasks. This demonstrates staff uncertainty about their roles and responsibilities and highlights that there is no clear accountability in the Registered Manager's absence.

The Registered Manager deals with concerns and complaints in a positive and proactive manner. However, the home has yet to implement a clear recording system for complaints to ensure that these can be consistently and effectively monitored.

The arrangements for internal and external monitoring of the home are weak. The independent visitor's reports fall short in providing good evaluation of his findings and expressing his view on whether the home is operating in a way that promotes young people's safety and welfare.

Uncertainty exists about the visitor's familiarity with his role as it was also identified during this inspection that young people's case records had been reviewed without clear consent being obtained. This is contrary to the expectations of the role and does not uphold young people's right to privacy and confidentiality.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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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