

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	11/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC446003
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Carlisle Mencap Limited
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	11/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
<p>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.</p> <p>This home was judged requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>Despite the short time lapse since the last full inspection of this home in January 2016, significant improvements have been made that have particularly strengthened the effectiveness of leadership and management and safeguarding practice within the home. The registered manager has relocated from her office in the organisation’s main building to the home’s centre. This enables her to have greater presence in the home and more proactive management oversight of practice when the home is operating to provide short breaks.</p> <p>Ten requirements and four recommendations were made at the last full inspection of the home. These have all been suitably addressed within this timescale. In strengthening safeguarding practice, young people’s individual risk assessments have been reviewed and updated. This ensures that staff are well informed of the full range of their individual risks prior to any visits or overnight stays. Additionally, the arrangements for management of medication have been reviewed and new protocols introduced that minimise the likelihood of staff making an error in administration that may compromise a young person’s safety. Together these improvements increase the safety and well-being of the highly vulnerable young people that access this service.</p> <p>The registered manager has achieved some success in developing her staff team. She has strengthened their focus on delivery of this short break service as distinct from the other roles that they hold within the organisation. The home has reorganised arrangements ensuring that all staff working in the home now have good opportunity to attend regular staff meetings. Staff also now receive their supervision directly from the registered manager, as opposed to other managers working within the wider organisation that previously held supervisory responsibilities. This has significantly improved accountability and strengthened the registered manager’s role in leading and managing her staff team in accordance with the home’s statement of purpose. She has improved oversight of the home’s operation and greater ability to influence practice and further developments within the home that will benefit young people accessing the service.</p>	

Staff speak positively of the changes that have occurred since the last inspection and identify greater opportunities for them to contribute their suggestions and ideas to developing the home. One staff member commented, 'I have just been on an autism-friendly training day. I have ideas to further personalise young people's rooms and I have management's agreement that I can plan and improve the environment here. I love working here. I wouldn't want to work anywhere else.'

Although the home only offers a limited short break service, young people clearly enjoy their visits to the home and the wide range of activities that are available to them. The home is well equipped with sensory and soft play areas, computers and other creative materials are also available for young people depending on their age and ability. However, staff also support young people to access their local community; often to shop, visit play areas or attend local clubs. This means that young people have excellent opportunities to have fun and learn from their local environment. Good communication is maintained with parents and social workers. Staff regularly seek feedback from parents before and after each visit to ensure that a good continuity of care is achieved. Parents value the service that the home provides, particularly recognising the contribution that they make in developing young people's confidence, self-esteem and social skills.

Despite the number of improvements that the home has recently secured, it was identified that frequent delays occur in both Ofsted and the home receiving copies of the independent person's reports following his visits. While this does not have any immediate impact on either the safety or welfare of young people, this reduces Ofsted's ability to effectively maintain oversight of the home's operation between inspections. It also impacts negatively on the home's ability to make a timely response to any specific recommendations that are designed to support the home's continuous improvement.

Information about this children's home

- The home 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
08/01/2016	Full	Requires improvement
17/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
31/01/2015	Full	Adequate
25/03/2014	Interim	Good progress

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
<p>44: Independent person: visits and reports</p> <p>The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. This relates specifically to Ofsted receiving reports in a timely manner in accordance with the guidance detailed in the inspection handbook: children's homes (Regulation 44 (7)(a)).</p>	<p>30/06/2016</p>

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 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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