

## Children's homes inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>13/12/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC446003</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>Carlisle Mencap Limited</b>
<b>Registered provider address</b>	<b>Carlisle Mencap Limited, Unit J3, Duchess Avenue, Kingmoor Park North, Carlisle CA6 4SN</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Sheila Gregory</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Julie Harrison</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Louise Redfern</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>13/12/2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Improved effectiveness</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>

## SC446003

### Summary of findings

#### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Young people are supported by a consistent staff team that knows the young people very well. This means that they enjoy their time during their short break.
- The staff team has a good understanding of the young people's individual needs because the manager ensures that effective behaviour management plans are in place for each young person accessing the service.
- Young people's views are actively sought, in order to develop their individual placement plans. The staff team is committed to ensuring that young people's views are promoted and that they have choices in their day-to-day care.
- Parents and professionals commented on the staff team's commitment to ensuring that young people are well protected and safe when staying at the home. Parents have confidence in the staff team and comment on the quality of relationships between the staff and their children.
- Young people are encouraged and supported to engage in community activities, enabling them to have new experiences alongside enjoying routine activities.
- An experienced and suitably qualified manager leads the staff who are provided with support and training to ensure that they are equipped to meet the known and emerging needs of all young people accessing the provision.
- Areas for the home's development include ensuring that:
  - Further work is undertaken to provide young people with a homely environment to enjoy their short break.
  - Records of physical restraint are completed in full, to meet regulation.
  - The manager improves recruitment records, to include photographic identification.
  - Staff support is improved by regular attendance at team meetings and ensuring that annual appraisals are completed.
  - Monitoring of the service is improved, both internally and externally.
  - Communication is improved with parents, with regard to parents consistently receiving an update after a short-break stay.

## 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>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to staff attendance at staff team meetings, the registered person must ensure that staff have the opportunity to come together as a team for regular meetings. (Regulation 13 (2)(b))</p>	10/02/2017
<p>The registered person must ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in the respect of each of the matters in schedule 2. This is in relation to ensuring that proof of photographic identification is on file. (Regulation 32 (3)(d) (schedule 2))</p>	12/02/2017
<p>The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of a measure of control they have spoken to the user about the measure. That within 5 days of the use of the measure that the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (b)(i)(c))</p>	12/02/2017
<p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit, which sets out in the independent visitor's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 44 (4)(a))</p>	12/02/2017
<p>The registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided for children and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (2)(a)(c))</p>	12/02/2017

### Recommendations

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

- Children homes should be homely and domestic environments and should seek

as far as possible to maintain a domestic feel rather than an 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- The home should frequently seek the involvement of parents/carers in that child's care. This specifically relates to ensuring that information is shared with parents following a short-break stay. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.8)
  
- All staff must have their performance appraised on an annual basis. This appraisal should take into account the views of other professionals and children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

## Full report

### 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 and/or children with learning disabilities. All placements are made under short-break arrangements and not as a permanent placement.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
08/01/2016	Full	Requires improvement
17/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
31/01/2015	Full	Adequate

## Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p><b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b></p>	<p><b>Good</b></p>
<p>The manager and staff team work effectively and consistently to ensure that young people benefit from their short breaks. The manager has developed the rota to provide for experienced and senior staff members to be available as part of the admission process, when the short-breaks service is in operation. This has strengthened the transition process and ensures that young people’s medication is appropriately booked into the service.</p> <p>The home currently operates on a limited basis providing short breaks to young people. 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. Young people have the opportunity to engage in a number of activities in the house, such as, the soft play area, a large well-equipped sensory room, an arts and crafts area and a newly developed quiet, cosy area where young people can spend time away from the group to be quiet and read or listen to music. The facilities provide excellent opportunities for fun and stimulation that meet their individual sensory needs. However, the building lacks a homely and personalised feel. Although the manager has started to address this, progress has been slow. Consequently, there is an institutionalised feel to the building.</p> <p>Young people’s voices are continually sought and heard by the staff team. They are placed at the centre of the service. They are supported and encouraged to plan their own short breaks. Part of the service supports young people to develop their skills in the community and they often accompany staff to the shops to buy the food for their menu choices. This enables young people to access the community and builds their self-confidence. For one young person, on starting at the short-breaks service she was unable to go to the shops, due to the level of anxiety this caused. However, over time, with the support of the staff team, they have progressed to writing shopping lists, selecting food items in the shop and then using the self-service checkout tills. This demonstrates significant progress given this young person’s individual starting point.</p> <p>Young people benefit from building positive and trusting relationships with the staff team. They enjoy spending time engaged in positive activities, such as pamper nights, singing and dancing. Young people also benefit from spending time with their peers away from the school environment. One parent commented, ‘It’s an essential service, it gives [name] a break for us and time for her to interact with others, especially other children.’</p>	

As young people’s confidence in the staff team grows, they begin to progress with their individual targets. For one young person, they have started to use verbal communication with staff rather than rely on Makaton to communicate their views and wishes. This is because the young person is comfortable and confident with staff. One young person said, ‘It’s a good place. I like going to see my friends.’

The manager and staff team support young people to develop essential life skills during their stay. They do this inclusive of young people’s individual ability. Young people make good progress developing skills which help to prepare them for adulthood and enable them to make their own choices. For example, young people are encouraged to make their own cold drinks and snacks and clear their own plates away after they have eaten.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Young people are safeguarded effectively when they are attending the provision for a short break. This is because of the care that is afforded to them by managers and staff during their stay. One parent commented, ‘I feel the staff team are a safe pair of hands. They can manage any situation.’</p> <p>Staff are well aware of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities as they receive regular safeguarding training. They demonstrated through discussion that they have a clear understanding of their roles and the safeguarding procedures, specifically the home’s whistleblowing policy.</p> <p>Staff are aware of young people’s particular vulnerabilities associated with their level of understanding and disability. Young people’s individual risk assessments and behaviour plans identify the potential risks that they may face and outline effective strategies to ensure that their safety is effectively promoted. Staff routinely implement these plans, which means that young people benefit from being consistently supported. One professional commented, ‘I was really impressed that the manager really listened to [name] placement to make sure everyone was working in the same way, wherever [name] was staying. This meant [name] was not affected by the change of placement.’</p> <p>Due to the specific needs of the young people, sanctions are not used within the home. Young people are encouraged to behave in a manner that is safe for them and others. Staff consistently implement the behaviour management plans that are in place and they support young people to respond to their environment and feelings appropriately. There has been just one physical intervention implemented since the last inspection. This is because physical interventions are used as the very last resort. However, staff do have regular training to ensure that they have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of how to manage challenging behaviour.</p>	



Records are completed following any incident. However, they do not yet meet regulations. Records of discussions with the individual staff members implementing the measure and discussions with young people are not recorded.

There have been no complaints, safeguarding concerns or allegations against staff since the last inspection. In addition, the provider's robust recruitment and employment arrangements help to ensure that staff who are recruited to work with young people are safe and suitable. However, staff files do not hold photographic identification. The manager confirms that this is reviewed at the point of employment but did acknowledge that a copy is not kept on file, as required by regulation.

The manager ensures that a range of health and safety checks are routinely carried out to ensure that young people and staff access a physically safe environment. Individual personal emergency evacuation plans are completed for each young person accessing the short-break service. Staff have a good understanding of these individual plans. The manager has previously consulted with the local fire service to ensure that they are aware of the types of disabilities that young people have who access the service, given the mobility issues that some young people have.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>The service is managed by an experienced and suitability qualified manager. She currently has joint responsibility for the management of the short-breaks service and the young people's outreach service for the organisation. This joint role is currently under review by the organisation. The manager remains focused on securing improvement for the service and ensuring that young people enjoy their short breaks and are provided with high-quality care during their stay.</p> <p>The staff team is made up of a number of staff who have several roles across the organisation. This is because the short-breaks service currently operates on a part-time basis. They say that they are well supported by the manager, who is always available for support. The organisation has a comprehensive training programme which is completed by individual staff. This ensures that staff have the skills and knowledge to support and manage young people accessing the service. Individual staff receive regular supervision, in line with the organisational procedures. However, not all staff have yet undertaken an annual appraisal. These appraisals do not yet provide for ascertaining the views of young people, parents or professionals involved with individual staff members. This is a missed opportunity to review with individual staff their practice. The manager does schedule regular team meetings. However, as staff are employed throughout the organisation, staff often do not attend the scheduled team meetings due to conflicting priorities across the organisation. This means that the staff team does not have the</p>	

opportunity to be a part of developing and improving the service that they provide. The manager is aware of this shortfall and has raised this at the strategic level. However, she has not been successful at ensuring that staff have adequate time allocated for attendance at the scheduled team meetings.

The manager regularly reviews the progress that all young people make and discusses any concerns with the relevant parties as part of the individual review process for young people accessing the short-break service. Generally, good relationships with parents, social workers, education providers and health professionals are developed. However, some parents did comment that young people often return home from their short breaks without any written feedback about what their child has done during their stay. Parents say that because of individual disabilities and communication issues they do not have a clear understanding of the experiences that their child has during the stay. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that systems provide for effective communication between parents and the service.

External monitoring has continued to be regular, with the visitor ensuring that they schedule their visits over the weekend in order to meet and capture the views of young people using the service and observe staff practice. HMCI now receives the independent visitor's reports in a timely and regular manner, a shortfall identified at the previous inspection. However, the visitor does not make a clear statement of their opinion as to whether the young people are effectively safeguarded in the home. The organisation has commissioned a new provider of independent visitors. However, these have not yet commenced. This change has been commissioned as the manager recognised that the current visitor is not producing reports which are evaluative and helping her to improve practice across the service.

The manager does monitor the effectiveness of the service and produces a report of her findings. However, the report is not evaluative and often when areas for improvement are identified the time between shifts for individual staff means that the monitoring is ineffective and does not support staff to recognise where improvement is required. That said, shortfalls identified were around records rather than practice with young people using the service. For example, limited recording of what the young person had done during their short break. The current system does not incorporate the views of the young people, parents and other professionals into this reporting procedure, which is a missed opportunity to holistically review the quality of care provided in the home.

The home is adequately resourced and delivers the services and support outlined in the statement of purpose, which has been recently reviewed and received by HMCI. The manager effectively responds to and monitors any serious incidents to ensure appropriate action is taken. All significant events relating to the welfare and protection of young people accessing the service are notified to the appropriate authorities in a timely manner.

Despite the shortfalls identified, it is clear that the manager is visible. She is committed to ensuring that the staff team has clear management support on individual shifts, with team leaders identified. The manager has established effective relationships with supporting agencies involved with individual young people to ensure continuity of care for young people when they access the service. Consequently, young are making progress and do enjoy their time during the short break.

## 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 that 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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