

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	23/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC446003
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Carlisle Mencap Ltd
Registered provider address	Carlisle Mencap Ltd, Unit J3, Duchess Avenue, Kingmoor Park North, Carlisle CA6 4SN

Responsible individual	Sheila Gregory
Registered manager	Julie Harrison
Inspector	Lisa Gregoire-Parker

Inspection date	23/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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	
<p>This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.</p>	
<p>The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She is in the process of moving from a dual role of also managing young people’s outreach service, to having sole responsibility for the short-break service. This will provide dedicated time to enhance the service further. The manager has the support of a recently appointed children’s operational manager. The staff team is stable. Staff are suitably qualified or working towards this. Staff receive good training packages and these reflect the needs of the young people. Young people benefit from having consistent staff that understand their needs and how to care for them effectively.</p> <p>Young people have care plans that are individualised and children centred. This supports the dependable care that young people receive. Recording is to a good standard and assessments and plans are easy to follow. Key risk indicators and strategies to manage these are clear. In the main there are links between assessment and planning, however this is not consistent throughout.</p> <p>Staff safeguard young people effectively. The manager offers clear direction in identifying young people’s welfare and vulnerabilities. Individual assessments inform young people’s progress outcomes. These are short and achievable, which empowers young people to reach them. Young people make good progress and feedback from social workers and parents is positive. Nonetheless, this is not routinely monitored and evaluated. Therefore, the progress that young people make is not easily identifiable. Furthermore, feedback from young people and their parents is not readily available. Thus, individual progress is not easy to track and the experiences of young people and their parents are not routinely captured.</p> <p>Communication pathways with parents are improving. Systems are in place to ensure that these are effective. However, parents do not always use these. Consequently, staff are not always updated on young people’s recent experiences, and furthermore, whether there have been any changes to their needs. The manager has introduced new systems to improve this, but they are not yet fully implemented.</p> <p>Young people receive an individual assessment prior to accessing the service. The</p>	

assessments explore all relevant needs and risks. Staff receive the necessary training, support and advice to ensure that young people experience seamless care. Transitions from the service to the adult service are equally seamless. Young people are introduced to their new arrangements of care well. This reduces anxiety and supports young people in managing the changes and making a positive transition.

The facilities continue to provide excellent opportunities for fun and stimulation. This meets a range of individual sensory needs. The environment is bright and spacious. The setting does, however, lack a feeling of warmth and homeliness. The building is purpose built and has an institutionalised feel. Efforts have been made to improve this. However, further work is needed. Bedrooms are particularly uninviting. They feel cold and empty and lack personalisation.

Young people and staff have positive relationships. Staff have effective communication skills and use these to engage young people. Young people are relaxed and benefit from calm and caring staff. Staff know the young people well and use the assessments and plans in place to ensure that they enjoy their respite care. Young people are encouraged to share what they would like to do through young people's meetings. While in place, these are not always completed. Consequently, it is not clear whether young people are engaged in developing activities for their stay. The manager is currently exploring ways to improve this.

Five requirements and three recommendations were made at the last inspection. While the majority of these have been addressed to a good standard, there are shortfalls. Two recommendations are repeated in this report.

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a registered charitable organisation and it is registered for up to four children. 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.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/12/2016	Full	Good
11/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
08/01/2016	Full	Requires improvement
17/03/2015	Interim	Sustained 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
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person should ensure the use of monitoring and review systems. (Regulation 12(2)(h)) In particular, to support effective management oversight of the care provided to the children.</p>	05/05/2017
<p>45: Review of quality of care</p> <p>The registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided for the children. (Regulation 45 (2)(a)) Specifically, young people’s plans and progress must be reviewed and recorded at regular intervals.</p>	05/05/2017

Recommendations

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

- Children’s 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)
- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home’s care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child’s cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted on. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 22, paragraph 4.11)

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 whom 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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