

1247885

Registered provider: Carlisle Mencap Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered by a charitable organisation to provide care and accommodation under short-break arrangements for up to five children. The home is registered for children who may have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 April 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: N/A

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- Staff at the home know children and young people exceptionally well and are skilled in their communication and interaction with them. This has a positive impact on young people's behaviour, and there are rarely incidents where young people become angry or frustrated and show challenging behaviour.

- Young people enjoy their visits to the home because they get to socialise with friends and take part in a variety of activities, some of which they would not get the opportunity to engage in at their homes.
- The use of target setting is well embedded into practice, which ensures that all young people are supported to become increasingly independent and are helped to achieve their goals.
- The staff team is stable, ensuring continuity of care for young people, and this supports the building and maintaining of positive relationships.
- Young people are carefully matched to each other for short breaks, their views are listened to about whom they would like to visit the home with. Some strong friendship groups have developed as a result of this.
- The home's management team is committed to making constant improvements to the service and strives to ensure that there is focus on the young people's experience of their visit. Some innovative practice is evident in respect to the involvement of young people in developing their care plans.
- The home has developed highly positive relationships with parents and external agencies. Good communication is considered key to fully meeting young people's needs and the home works hard to maintain two-way communication, which promotes positive experiences.

The children's home's areas for development

- Staff are not yet trained in all areas of safeguarding. Although no deficits were noted in safeguarding practice which directly impacted on young people, training in areas such as child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism, internet safety, drug and alcohol misuse would help staff to better understand issues affecting young people in society today.
- Not all staff are qualified to Level 3 National Vocational Qualification in Residential Childcare, although they have mostly been in post for some considerable time.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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This is the home's first inspection after registration under Carlisle Mencap Ltd.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that staff have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. In particular, staff should be trained to identify and address risk in the areas of child sexual exploitation, internet safety, drugs and alcohol, radicalisation and extremism. (Regulation 12 (2)(iii))</p>	01/06/2017
<p>32: Fitness of workers</p> <p>The registered person may only employ an individual if the individual has the appropriate experience, qualifications and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England). (Regulation 32 3(b) and 4(a))</p>	01/06/2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people enjoy their short-break experience and often look forward to their visits to the home. They are listened to regarding whom they enjoy spending time with, and rotas are then developed which enable children who have positive relationships to visit the home at the same time. A result of this is that some young people have developed strong friendship groups with others who do not attend the same school, which positively impacts on their social development.

Preparation for admission is well considered and thoughtfully planned out at a pace commensurate with the young person's wishes and presentation. Admissions are agreed at a panel meeting which ensures that the young person is matched to the most appropriate service. A key worker is allocated to collect information about the young person from parents, school, health and social workers. Families and young people visit

the home prior to the young person being admitted for short breaks. Young people start with visits, perhaps for tea and day-care, before progressing on to overnight stays.

Staff have developed highly positive relationships with parents and external agencies, ensuring that all relevant information is shared. Social workers spoken to as part of this inspection gave highly positive feedback about both the level of care offered and the good communication between the home and themselves.

Staff are attentive to the young people's wishes and feelings, and gather these in a wide variety of ways, including speaking and communicating with them, young people's meetings, involving them in care planning and speaking to parents and school about young people's preferences. Young people feel that staff listen to them and respond to their views. When consulted about whether they are happy to come to the home, one young person reported, 'It's firework happy.'

The home's care plans are well-thought-out and highly detailed documents giving the reader a great deal of information about how to care for the individual young person. Additionally, the home has introduced simplified child-centred care plans for young people to participate in compiling and contribute to. These are a great success, with a really high level of contribution and ownership by the young people who have completed them so far.

Young people are able to participate in a wide range of activities. The home itself has a soft-play area with a ball pool, a sensory room and large outdoor play area which young people enjoy. Additionally, they participate in games, themed craft activities and baking. Young people make trips to the local park and supermarket, where they learn about spending money. The staff take some children on mini holidays to a seaside caravan park, and some young people enjoyed a trip to London.

Young people learn about the world and their own and others' culture through a themed noticeboard. The theme is regularly changed and covers topics such as Chinese New Year and spring. Children contribute to the design and participate in craft activities which are displayed.

Young people are helped to become increasingly independent through the use of target setting. Targets are agreed in conjunction with young people's parents (often with consultation with social workers and schools). Young people work towards targets that are specific to them and that they achieve on an incremental basis. Target sheets clearly record their progress and are designed to be age appropriate. Rewards are varied and include certificates which are displayed in the home.

The home has a close partnership with some schools that the young people attend, having a termly meeting with one deputy head. Young people take part in a range of educational activities, and their files contain information about their education targets and timetables. One parent reported that the home supported her son with homework.

The home environment is welcoming and homely. Although young people cannot

personalise their bedrooms due to the nature of the service, they are able to choose from a variety of differently decorated rooms that have thoughtful furnishings and art work which make them each individual. The communal spaces are highly individualised, and staff have been fantastically creative in their designs and decor, making the home a really positive, welcoming and vibrant environment for young people.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people feel safe at the home, their parents are confident that they are safe, and social workers report that the home can recognise and appropriately respond to any safeguarding issue.

There are no significant safeguarding issues for the young people accessing short breaks in this home. They do not misuse drugs and alcohol, are not criminalised, do not behave antisocially, they do not go missing from home, and there are no incidences of child sexual exploitation or extremism or radicalisation. There is no misuse of the internet. However, all young people are vulnerable due to their age, learning and/or physical disabilities. The home does not yet have a comprehensive training programme in place for staff which covers all of the above. There is no current impact on young people because of this, but a requirement is made so that staff can be trained to identify any signs of risk or abuse and respond appropriately should any situation arise that requires them to do so.

The home has successfully developed links with the local police force, members of which recently visited the home to educate the young people on the role of the police. Their interactive presentation was a great success with the young people, who enjoyed participation by trying on police uniform and taking fingerprints.

The home has recently increased the technology available to young people by enabling some to access wi-fi. The home now has iPads, Sky TV and Xbox live. Young people are always supported if they access the internet, for example through Xbox live, and age settings are set to the appropriate levels. Young people are educated about stranger danger when using the internet.

All young people have risk assessments which are detailed and individualised and show that staff have a good awareness of their risks and vulnerabilities. The risk assessments not only recognise pertinent risks but advise staff on how to avoid or avert risks in specific situations, which evidences a good level of safeguarding as well as good understanding of individual young people.

The home has personal emergency evacuation plans for young people in the event of a fire. Those sampled were specific to the individual's needs and abilities. It was identified that one wheelchair user did not have an evacuation plan, and this was rectified at the time of the inspection. The manager also took on board advice about identifying a specific staff member to be responsible for each young person's evacuation at the shift planning stage to ensure that responsibilities were clear.

The home has not had to use restrictive physical intervention since the previous inspection, although all staff have been re-trained in Team Teach following a shift from the use of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. Staff understand young people's behaviour and are skilled in de-escalation and therefore have not had to resort to physical methods of behaviour management. Similarly, the home has not used consequences as a method of behaviour management. Young people spoken to during the inspection suggested a number of methods by which their behaviour might be managed, but none had actually been involved in a situation where behaviour management was necessary. Young people are positively rewarded for behaving well, and this seems sufficient to prevent episodes of more challenging behaviour.

Young people stay in a physically safe environment. Listening devices are used for some young people overnight, and this is in agreement with their parents and for their safety. There have been no accidents in the home.

Young people's medications are stored safely. They are carefully signed in and out, with two members of staff checking and signing. Medication administration procedures are effective, and no errors have occurred.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home's manager is newly registered, although he has worked at the home for a considerable time. He is a qualified social worker and is soon to commence a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare. The manager has made every effort to promote the development of the home, including a full redecoration of the home and the introduction of new technology. A development plan is in place which clearly sets out objectives and how these will be achieved. The manager shows commitment to improvement and has made a very positive start. The ethos of the home is child centred, and any developments identified are in line with improving the service for young people.

The home is fully staffed and has sufficient staff on each shift to meet the needs of young people. Some staff are still to gain their Level 3 Diploma in Residential Childcare although they have worked at the home for (in some cases) many years. A requirement is set to ensure that these staff are enrolled on and complete the relevant course of study. The staff team is highly experienced, and this is reflected in the high level of care afforded to the young people using the service. Staff show high levels of commitment by engaging in charitable fundraising events for young people to access a broad range of outings and activities (although basic outings and activities are funded from the home's budget). Staff have undertaken gruelling cycle rides to raise money, and young people and their families have been involved in a 'bag pack' at a local supermarket.

Staff receive regular supervision and yearly appraisal. They report the management team to be supportive and supervision to be helpful. Additionally, staff spoken to said that between formal supervision sessions managers were available for discussion at any

time. The new manager has introduced a 'feelings star' into staff supervision, which helps identify any areas of low morale or areas to focus on improving.

The home had previously been operated by a county council and has been re-registered by a charitable organisation. The management of this change has resulted in minimal changes to young people's care, which is positive both for them and their parents. New senior management arrangements and support have so far been effective, with a new operations manager regularly visiting the home to offer support.

The home makes every effort to involve parents and other stakeholders by producing a regular newsletter and holding events, such as an afternoon tea party. The purpose of this is to introduce the new providers to parents and external agencies and to enable them to share any ideas or express any concerns, which shows positive and proactive partnership working. When parents have made complaints about the service (which is rare) the manager responds effectively to address the issue.

The home's statement of purpose has been updated to reflect its new registration and provides a useful document which clearly outlines the services on offer. The children's guide, likewise, has been updated, and it broadly reflects the understanding level of the young people using the service.

Staff report high levels of training, although gaps in training have been identified and documented in the safeguarding section of this report. Training for some medical procedures is detailed and individualised to young people, and the home involves the community children's nurse to support them in learning medical procedures. The staff team access online training in addition to face-to-face training and have all recently completed training in Makaton to enhance their communication skills. There is a training matrix in place for monitoring staff training and identifying when refresher training is due.

Monitoring activity is used to good effect. The manager's internal monitoring systems are detailed and effective. The manager ensures that feedback is sought from parents, agencies and young people to inform planning and development of the service. External monitoring is taking place. The visits and reports are considered to be useful, and reports completed have been highly positive about the service provided.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1247885

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Carlisle Mencap Ltd

Registered provider address: Unit J3, Duchess Avenue, Kingmoor Park North, Carlisle
CA6 4SN

Responsible individual: Sheila Gregory

Registered manager: Craig Scott

Inspector(s)

Charlie Bamber, social care regulatory inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

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