

SC446003

Registered provider: Carlisle Mencap Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

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.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 November 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: 23 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The home provides a safe and comfortable environment which young people

feel safe and well cared for. It is purpose built, appropriately secure and well equipped to meet young people's specific needs.

- Children and young people enjoy visiting the home. They have fun and are provided with good opportunities to participate in a variety of activities. These provide chances for them to socialise with peers and to build self-esteem and confidence in their abilities.
- Parents value the service and feel confident that their children and young people are well cared for and supported during their short-break stays.
- Staff are highly trained and experienced in dealing with children and young people with a range of disabilities and complex needs. Consequently, they are familiar with the needs of the children and young people whom they are caring for, and are able to meet these safely and with sensitivity.
- Children's and young people's needs are well documented. Risk assessments are comprehensive and ensure that staff have a good awareness of young people's personal vulnerabilities and how they can be best supported to optimise their safety and personal care.
- Staff recruitment and selection practice is robust. The organisation allows only staff who have been thoroughly checked, vetted and deemed suitable to work with children and young people at the short-breaks setting.
- The home's manager is enthusiastic and committed to further improving the home to achieve a high-quality service.
- Good arrangements exist to quality assure the service currently being offered. Reports demonstrate that the short-break service is making a difference, keeping young people safe and providing a good quality of care.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Despite good arrangements being in place for the safe management and administration of medication, errors occur that have the potential to compromise children's and young people's safety.
- The manager's six-monthly review report does not yet clearly identify any actions required for the next six months of delivery at the home, or how those actions will be addressed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/12/2016	Full	Good
11/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
08/01/2016	Full	Requires improvement

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
The registered person must 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))	22/12/2017

Recommendations

- Decide what each six monthly review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home and any areas of high risk to children. The review does not need to address every part of the Quality Standards but should clearly identify any actions required for the next 6 months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home provides a safe and secure environment for a small number of children and young people with a range of complex and developmental needs. Despite only operating on a very limited basis, the home is highly valued by parents and the children and young people who are currently provided with short breaks. One parent commented: 'The home has been a lifeline. I wouldn't cope without it. The home has been very responsive, providing me with extra sessions to help during a difficult time.'

The home is purpose built and well equipped to meet young people's specific needs. All facilities are appropriately accessible for disabled children and young people. Staff have accessible lifting equipment to assist those with mobility issues. Staff receive relevant training and guidance to ensure that those who require help feel safe and confident while they are being moved.

Children and young people enjoy their visits and overnight stays at this short-breaks home. New admissions are carefully planned, having been considered at a short-break admission panel. At the panel, the manager gathers information from other professionals, including social workers and teachers, to match and plan for children's and young people's visits. One parent commented: 'My daughter comes at the same time as

some other girls. They have a real “girly weekend” and enjoy socialising. This is the only opportunity she has to do this.’

Children’s and young people’s needs and wishes are well met. Short-break plans clearly describe children’s and young people’s individual needs and daily routines. Where possible, children and young people are encouraged to express their views about their care and preferences. For those children and young people with communication difficulties, staff seek to build a picture of their views and wishes from parents and other professionals who know them well.

The manager and staff demonstrate a real commitment to improving children’s and young people’s life chances. Their ethos is firmly centred on ensuring that children’s and young people’s individual disabilities do not become a barrier to them experiencing their environment and the range of opportunities that it offers. Children and young people regularly enjoy outings and activities in their local community. These are many and varied, including bowling, shopping and swimming. During this inspection, two children enjoyed watching a local fireworks display. The following day they had a trip out to the coast for a walk and some ice cream. These are positive examples of how the home is promoting young people’s inclusion in the local community.

Most children and young people are introduced to the home slowly, often having a day or teatime visit before staying overnight at the home. This helps them to become familiar with their environment and the staff who will be supporting them. Consequently, they feel settled and comfortable around staff when they stay overnight away from their families. Over time, it is evident that children and young people develop greater confidence and emotional resilience. One parent commented: ‘She really settled in well. Staff give her encouragement, and this helps with her independence. Going for short breaks has been good for her confidence.’

Children’s and young people’s complex health needs are well understood. The manager and staff work in close cooperation with the community nursing team to ensure that children’s and young people’s healthcare plans are comprehensive in meeting the full extent of their needs.

Parents and social workers value the service, and express confidence in the manager and his staff team. One social worker commented: They are absolutely excellent. School was experiencing particular difficulty with this one child’s behaviour. During his short breaks, staff coped really well with him. His mum is now very confident with the home.’

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

The safety and protection of young people during their short-break stays at this home are paramount. The environment is physically safe and free from obvious hazards that could present a danger to the children and young people who use this short-break service. The locked main entrance door to the front of the building, which can only be accessed by staff with a key fob, is a safety feature to keep unwanted visitors out of the building rather than to restrict children’s and young people’s liberty. Fire doors to the

side and rear of the property enable young people to access the enclosed garden, which is a safe area for outdoor play and exploration.

Support arrangements for children's and young people's personal safety are well documented in highly personalised individual risk assessments that deal with a range of environmental risks, activities, known behaviours and individual vulnerabilities. Additionally, the manager has taken special care to ensure that children and young people have personal evacuation plans. These clearly inform staff how each child and young person should be helped and supported to leave the property in the event of a fire. Although only some children and young people can recognise and may have some limited understanding of fire evacuation drills, routine practices ensure that staff are well rehearsed in helping children and young people to leave the building safely without incident, should they have to.

Since the home opened, there have not been any incidents of children or young people going missing. However, staff are aware of and familiar with the steps that they should take, should such an event ever occur. Staff are particularly effective in promoting children's and young people's safety when away from the short-break home. Children and young people are extremely well supervised, and staff remain vigilant in the knowledge that many are highly vulnerable and have little understanding of matters such as road safety and 'stranger danger'.

There is no reported use of restraint or sanctions. Staff confirm that the focus for children during short breaks is to have fun and take pleasure in what they are doing. Children and young people are treated with dignity and respect. Their plans clearly identify those occasions and daily routines that require staff intervention to promote their safety and well-being, for example the need for privacy to change the pad of a child with incontinence to help them to feel dry and comfortable.

There are both regular training and good arrangements for the storage, handling and administration of medication. However, the home has notified Ofsted of two recent occasions when errors occurred. One involved a bottle of medicine being accidentally dropped and the other identifying a missed dose of medication that a child should have received. On both occasions, professional medical advice was immediately sought. Confirmation was received that the children and young people concerned were not at any immediate risk. The manager has since revised arrangements to ensure that two staff are always responsible for the administration and recording of medication. This is intended to prevent further administration errors that have the potential to compromise a child's or young person's safety.

Recruitment and selection practice is robust and well documented. The organisation takes great care to ensure that children and young people are supported only by staff who are checked and vetted and deemed suitable to work with vulnerable children. This is understood to be fundamental in promoting their safety and well-being.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The organisation has appointed a new manager following the resignation of the former registered manager in July 2017. The manager is enthusiastic and experienced, having worked for the organisation for a number of years. He has been employed both as a team leader for the organisation's outreach service and latterly the short-break service, when this home opened. He shows commitment and determination to improve the home to offer a high-quality service.

The manager has considerable knowledge of and skill in working with vulnerable children and young people with a range of disabilities and complex health needs. He currently possesses a level 3 qualification relevant to his role and has recently enrolled to complete his level 5 diploma award. The manager has made an application to Ofsted to become the registered manager for this short-break service. He is currently awaiting an interview with Ofsted to decide his suitability for the role.

The manager has successfully acted on all requirements and recommendations made at the home's interim inspection in March 2017. These aimed to improve and move the service forward. For example, further redecoration and new soft furnishings are helping to give the property a more homely feel. New-painted murals, especially those seen on entering the home, provide a warmer and more child-friendly atmosphere.

The manager has used this theme to provide further mural chalkboards. These identify the plans for each short-break stay and record children's and young people's choices, such as for meals and activities during their stay at the home. Photographs are successful in capturing this activity, showing how children's and young people's views are obtained. This record also provides a positive overview of children's and young people's progress during their short-break visits.

The manager has created more opportunities to involve parents and carers in the home's activities and keep them well informed of children's and young people's progress during short breaks. The home organises regular coffee mornings that provide parents and carers with a social opportunity to come together and chat with staff. These meetings help to build effective partnerships with parents, enabling them to become more familiar with the staff who are caring for their children and young people. The service has engaged some parents in trialling a smartphone application that enables them to receive live updates and pictures of their child or young person during their visit. The application, originally designed for schools, is known to be safe and secure. So far in the trial, this application is proving popular. It allows parents and carers to share in special moments that are captured on camera, and provides positive reassurance that the short break is progressing well.

The majority of the staff are suitably experienced and qualified with a level 3 award. Those that are not yet qualified are enrolled and working towards their award.

The manager has established good routines to ensure that his staff are supported and kept well informed. Staff receive regular professional supervision and participate in

regular staff meetings. This enables the manager to have certainty about his staff's competency and to provide good opportunities to identify any further development needs. Staff comment positively on the support that they receive and feel that there is a new energy in the home to move forward and progress.

Staff say that they are well supported to carry out their roles, having been provided with a wide and diverse range of training by the organisation. The service's mandatory training programme ensures that staff are kept up to date with child protection and safeguarding matters. Additionally, staff are required to undertake considerable training in relation to specific conditions and disabilities. This includes courses such as on autism awareness, epilepsy, diabetes and percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) feeding. Consequently, staff are knowledgeable and highly trained to meet the needs of the children and young people whom they care for.

The manager and the organisation's service manager actively audit and review the work undertaken at the home to improve and develop the service that it provides. The home's development plan provides a comprehensive overview of how the manager proposes to further develop and improve the service. Ofsted routinely receives reports from the home's independent visitor following each of his monthly visits. These demonstrate a rigorous evaluation of the service and identify the improvements required and already made by the manager. This external monitoring arrangement is valued by the manager, who sees it as a positive opportunity for him and his staff team to learn and promote good practice. However, it is not always reflected in the plans.

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 whom 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: SC446003

Provision sub-type: 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: Post vacant

Inspector

Gillian Walters, social care inspector

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