

# 1247885

Registered provider: Carlisle Mencap Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is registered by a charitable organisation to provide care for up to five children under short-break arrangements. The home provides children with a child-centred approach. The forefront of all practice is conducted in a safe, caring, relaxed and homely environment.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2020 and is qualified and experienced.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 3 December 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

### Inspection dates: 11 & 13 August 2021

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 29 October 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/10/2018	Full	Outstanding
07/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/04/2017	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Although the home is very welcoming and homely, some furnishings are showing signs of wear and tear and the home's décor is looking in need of redecoration. This detracts from the overall homely appearance staff have created.

Placement planning is highly detailed and individual to each child. Plans take account of the local authority's request for support. Plans match with the child and family's need for support and take account of the child's compatibility with other children coming for short breaks. Children's healthcare needs are clearly detailed to ensure that staff have a sound understanding the personalised care required.

Children appear happy when they arrive at the home. They are very familiar with their surroundings and the staff that care for them. Staff are familiar with children's communication abilities. As far as possible, staff will encourage children to make choices about their meals, activities and the staff they want to assist them. Children are treated with dignity and respect and are encouraged to be as independent as they can be.

Children enjoy coming to this home and benefit from a range of outings and activities provided. For example, some enjoy spending time at a farm with animals, while others enjoy a trip to the seaside. The home has a variety of games and toys to appeal to children's personal sensory needs. Friendships are encouraged as the home is a great place for children to socialise.

Parents really appreciate the support of the home and speak highly of the staff and the care they provide. Staff ensure that parents are kept well informed of their child's progress and activities during their short-break visits. One parent commented, 'I am so happy with what they do. We have no family or friends that can help. They take such good care of him. It gives me peace of mind.'

Parents very satisfied with the service that they receive, despite the limited service that the home can offer. Some parents talk of the home being a 'lifeline' and a 'godsend'. Parents describe communication as being very good between themselves and the home. Staff keep them up to date with their children's activities, sending photographs of them enjoying those activities via the home's closed social media page. Parents say that they are in no doubt that their children are safe and well looked after at the home.

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

Children's safety and well-being are the utmost priority for managers and staff. Children's needs and vulnerabilities are comprehensively understood by staff and regularly reviewed with parents to ensure that staff are kept up to date with any

changes in their care arrangements. Parents are confident that their children are kept safe and well cared for during their short breaks.

Risk assessments provide a thorough picture of the child's level of vulnerability and guide staff to the actions necessary to reduce or mitigate risk. Combined with the child's plans, these documents ensure that staff have an in-depth understanding of the child and their needs.

Staff have responded effectively to government guidance to ensure that the home is kept clean and sterile to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Staff have taken care to ensure that children's safety is their priority as they fully appreciate the potential health risks to children, especially those with existing complex health needs.

Children do not go missing from this home. However, staff are conversant with the home's procedure should such an incident occur. Safety arrangements that have been agreed with parents ensure that children are kept safe and secure at the home. For example, parents understand that external doors are kept locked to ensure children's safety and to prevent unwanted visitors accessing the home. Children are closely supervised by staff when out in the community to ensure their personal safety as most children have little or no road safety awareness.

Physical intervention seldom occurs, but when it is necessary, staff use it appropriately and for a minimum duration to ensure that everyone is kept safe. Records made of such incidents provide a clear understanding of why the intervention was necessary and how it was safely conducted. Staff debriefs ensure that staff can reflect on an incident and identify any learning from it to update children's plans.

Many children that stay at the home have multiple medications to take daily. For the majority, this is safely administered according to the prescription information. However, since Ofsted's last visit, the home has notified Ofsted and other relevant parties of a further medication error, approximately a year since the last one was reported. This involved a delay in a child receiving medication. Fortunately, this caused no harm to the child concerned. The matter was identified and dealt with swiftly, ensuring that the child's GP was contacted for advice. The home's medication procedures have already been reviewed and are consistent with safe practice.

Staff recruitment is robust. Safer recruitment practice is followed to ensure all staff are thoroughly checked and vetted before they work in the home. This is to reduce the likelihood of children being cared for by an unsuitable adult.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The home is led and managed by a qualified and experienced manager who has worked with both children and young adults with learning disabilities and complex care needs. He is supported by an assistant manager who has worked at the home as part of the care team since 1986. Their skill and experience combined provides the home with strong leadership.

The charity's contract with the local authority to run this short-break home is due to expire next year, so the contract is again up for tender. This is causing some uncertainty and anxiety for staff. Staff have experienced a difficult period since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has included a significant period of closure, as well as managing the health and safety of vulnerable children and staff when the home reopened. Staff shortages have placed pressure on the number of short breaks that can be offered to children.

Staff say that they feel well supported by their registered manager and appreciate that the management team is currently working more than their contracted hours to ensure they can provide care for those children and families most in need. New staff are supported to complete their induction to the home, becoming familiar with the home's policies and procedures. Additionally, they participate in a wide range of training that ensures that they have the knowledge to safely and competently care for the wide ranging needs of the children cared for at the home.

However, despite the level of support that is felt, staff supervision has not always taken place regularly or with sufficient frequency to ensure best practice. Staff acknowledge that communication is a concern for them during this uncertain period. Monthly staff meetings have taken place to keep staff updated and staff say they feel supported by their immediate managers.

Internal and external monitoring arrangements are good and report effectively on the running of the home and support children and families receive. However, recommendations made by the independent person have not always been acted upon within the timescales suggested. This has delayed some improvements being made to the home.

## 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>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))</p> <p>This refers specifically to ensuring that furnishings that are worn and damaged are replaced, and that damaged or obsolete equipment is removed and replaced as required.</p>	30 September 2021
<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p> <p>In particular the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them;</p> <p>medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child;</p>	30 September 2021

<p>a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child.</p> <p>Paragraph (2) does not apply to medicine which—</p> <p>is stored by the child for whom it is provided in such a way that other persons are prevented from using it; and</p> <p>may be safely self-administered by that child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3)(a)(b))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, this includes the registered manager's own supervision and a greater frequency of supervision for new staff.</p>	<p>30 September 2021</p>

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that best use is made of information arising from independent monitoring to ensure continuous improvement within the home, particularly when immediate action is recommended by the independent person. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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:** Carlisle Mencap Ltd, Unit J3, Duchess Avenue, Kingmoor Park North, Carlisle CA6 4SN

**Responsible individual:** Post vacant

**Registered manager:** Scott Henry

## Inspector

Gillian Walters, Social Care Inspector



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