

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	21 June 2016
Unique reference number	1183605
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Lonsdale Care Ltd
Registered provider address	14 Meadowbarn Close, Cottam, Preston PR4 0AG

Responsible individual	Simon Wright
Registered manager	Paul McClintock
Inspector	Charlie Bamber

Inspection date	21 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

1183605

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- Sufficient safeguards have not been in place to prevent young people engaging in sexually inappropriate and harmful behaviour.
- The home's response to safeguarding incidents is robust in most respects, but not all key agencies have been notified of one instance.
- Where an incident of inappropriate behaviour has taken place, opportunities to explore and learn from the incident have not been given to young people or staff.
- Arrangements have not been in place for an independent visitor to visit the home each month, with no visit taking place within the first month that the home was open.

The children's home strengths

- Most young people placed at the home are making good progress in reducing their risks. Child sexual exploitation, drug and alcohol misuse and missing from home all reduced in the young people.
- When young people have minimal or no contact or communication with their family, the home supports them to re-establish and build on contact.
- Planning for young people's education is well considered. One young person has exceeded expectations in sitting GCSE exams, and clear plans are in place for all young people to access full-time education.
- Although this is a new home with a new staff team, the young people are benefiting from staff with a high level of experience and qualification who are well attuned to their individual needs.
- Staff are good at developing relationships with young people and have effective communication. This reduces the level of conflict and, as a result, there are low levels of physical intervention.
- With the exception of one specific incident, the home maintains very good communication with key agencies and family members. Placing authorities report highly positively about the quality of care and the level of communication.
- Matching processes are robust and, where a child has not been a positive match, this has been identified at an early stage and steps taken to end the placement at the earliest opportunity.

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met In order to meet the engaging with the wider system standard, the registered person must ensure that staff— (a) seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; Specifically, that any safeguarding incidents involving a child should be reported immediately to their placing authority.	11 July 2016
11: The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationship standard the registered person must ensure that staff— (2)(vi) help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;	21 July 2016
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure that staff— (2)(iv) manage relationships between young people to prevent them from harming each other; 2(b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and protect each child effectively from harm;	11 July 2016
44: Independent person: visits and reports (1) The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.	31 July 2016

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is registered to accommodate up to three young people, of either gender, aged between eight and 17 years. The home offers care to young people who may be experiencing emotional and/or behaviour difficulties.

Recent inspection history

The home was registered in March 2016, and this is its first inspection.

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
One placement has been particularly difficult for the home and this has impacted on the experiences of all the young people placed. A particularly significant safeguarding incident has occurred, for which follow-up work should have taken place with the young people in order to help them to understand the impact of this and to learn about appropriate social and sexual behaviour. A requirement is made in relation to this. While this is an isolated incident, its significance and impact are sufficient to affect the judgement in this area. Young people are involved in the day-to-day running of the home to a very good level. Their views are sought on issues such as placement matching, interior decoration and choosing their own key worker. Young people express their views regularly on an informal basis, and more formally through key-worker sessions and young people's meetings. Progress is good for most young people across most areas. One young person has engaged in education, when she previously had not, and has taken GCSE examinations. This far exceeds expectations. A number of rewards have been made to recognise this. Another young person has been enrolled on a summer college course after being out of mainstream education for a lengthy period of time, and it is hoped that he will be able to attend full-time college in the next academic year. Young people are encouraged to be healthy. They attend routine health appointments and increase their engagement in activities. One young person has	

ceased smoking since being in placement, and another plans to stop.

The staff are careful to encourage and develop any interests that a young person may have, for example bike maintenance and learning the guitar. They provide thoughtful and supportive care to the young people, and are sensitive to their past and present experiences, understanding the impact that events may have on their mood, presentation and motivation. Young people report positive relationships with staff, and feel that there are members of staff who they trust and can talk to about issues affecting them.

Placing authorities and family members speak very highly of the placement, with one parent stating: 'they are absolutely fantastic, they have done a miracle with my daughter. What a difference they have made, they've been a lifeline.'

The children's guide has been developed to account for children's differing ages and levels of understanding. It provides clear and detailed information about the home, and is particularly useful in providing information for those young people who are unable to visit the home prior to placement. The guide contains information about making complaints. The young people report that they are aware of the complaints procedure.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
For some young people who are high risk of missing from home, their risks are significantly reduced from the point of placement. In part, this is due to the location of the home being far from the previous negative influence of their peers. The home recognises this and understands that young people will need to build on the skills that they have learned to ensure that they can keep themselves safe in environments where they are at greater risk. The home has plans in place to begin to expose young people to more risky situations and environments in an incremental way, for example by starting at the local college and accessing transport independently, and having family contact in their home areas. Other risks for young people, such as child sexual exploitation and drug and alcohol misuse, have similarly been reduced, and the home has plans to expose young people only gradually to the potential risks in order to develop further their ability to keep themselves safe. For young people who go missing there is a coordinated response, and the home takes action to try to ensure that independent return interviews take place. Where they do take place and any issues are highlighted, these are acted upon to ensure young people's safety. When it is identified that a young person is impacting negatively on the safety and	

well-being of another young person placed, the home takes action to reduce that risk, for example by taking a young person on a holiday for a short period to prevent contact between the young people.

The home has comprehensive risk assessments in place which clearly highlight the level of risk for young people in most specific areas. The home has had one incident of sexually inappropriate contact between the young people which occurred during the night in a young person's bedroom. This is a serious safeguarding issue, affecting three of the young people placed. The home's safeguarding procedures and risk assessments were not, at the time, sufficiently robust to prevent the incident from taking place. Steps have been put in place to prevent a similar issue from occurring in the future.

While the response to incidents of sexually inappropriate behaviour has been robust in respect of ensuring young people's safety, one local authority was not informed of the incident and therefore did not have the opportunity to take action, should it have wished to do so.

There have been some incidents of very challenging behaviour which have been well managed by staff, who are skilled in de-escalating situations. This has resulted in a very low number of physical interventions.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home's manager is sufficiently experienced and qualified to manage the home effectively. Although this is a new home, an experienced staff team has been recruited with the skills to provide a high level of care to the young people. The manager acknowledges that the new staff will take time to develop and embed their practice and come together as a team. However, the rotas are arranged in such a way that less experienced staff benefit from those with more experience, and team leaders spend time on shift together to develop consistent practice across the teams. Thorough and detailed team meetings, handovers and the good use of a communication log ensure that communication is good and that relevant information is always shared. Where areas for improvement are noted, there are plans in place to ensure that these are implemented, for example in the quality of recording of team meeting minutes. The manager has a good understanding of the individual needs of the children and makes these a priority. Progression of young people across key areas is documented, and there is drive and commitment to building on progress already made. Matching activity is robust and the home identifies at a very early stage where a	

child's placement is not suitable. It takes effective action to mitigate the impact on other young people and to move the young person on in as positive and planned way as possible, working in close partnership with their placing authority.

Apart from one missed communication regarding a significant incident, there are effective working relationships with parents and placing authorities. This promotes a joined-up approach to achieving the best outcomes for young people. Parents and social workers speak highly positively of the placement and the positive impact it is having on the young people placed.

Positive internal monitoring processes are in place, and regular checks across a wide range of areas result in good oversight of care of young people and the working of the home. External monitoring is now in place and reports are assisting the home's manager to maintain high standards. A visit by an independent person did not take place in the first month after the home had opened. While this has resulted in a requirement being made, this matter has now been rectified and there is little evidence of impact on the young people placed.

Staff spoken to reported their work environment to be supportive. They receive a detailed induction, regular supervision and training, and feel that they can approach more senior or experienced members of staff at any time for advice and support.

The home's statement of purpose is detailed and up to date, providing families and placing authorities with a clear understanding of the support and services offered by the home. Amendments to the statement of purpose are timely and are sent to the regulator.

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 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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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