

1231405

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides residential short stays for up to six children who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. The home is run by a local authority.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since February 2016.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 February 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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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: 28 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/11/2019	Full	Good
28/01/2019	Full	Outstanding
12/09/2017	Full	Good
16/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This home provides residential short breaks for disabled children. Children benefit from carefully planned and well organised care. Staff try to ensure that children who stay together are well matched, and this supports children to build and sustain new friendships.

Children receive highly individualised care from staff who know them well. Children have positive and trusting relationships with staff. One social worker said, 'The staff are excellent, they know the children [who] visit extremely well, and [they] ensure [that] their approach and care [are] person centred.'

Staff work hard to create a warm and welcoming home environment. This helps to alleviate any anxieties children may have. The home is spacious and well maintained. Children enjoy using the well-equipped sensory room, and there are large grounds with lots of outdoor play equipment for children to use.

Staff are creative and plan fun activities for children to take part in during their stay. As a result, children enjoy their short breaks at this home. One parent said, '[Child's name] absolutely loves it. He gets so excited when he goes there and when I pick him up. He is full of smiles. I know he enjoys it.'

Staff are aspirational for children and support them to reach their full potential. Children are encouraged to learn new skills and to be as independent as possible.

The opportunity for children to access a regular and reliable short break has been invaluable for some families. Some parents told the inspector that this was particularly the case during periods of national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, one professional commented, 'During the pandemic staff worked exceptionally hard to support the children, mitigating further family breakdowns.'

Staff are extremely flexible and child centred in their approach. For example, when one child's family requested stays on a different night, the staff who are specially trained to meet this child's needs, moved their shift pattern to work with this child.

Children's care plans contain lots of information about routines that are important to children. However, not all children's plans contained enough information about how children should be supported when staff are addressing their personal care needs. A recommendation has been made to address this.

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

Children receive a high level of supervision and support that is aligned to their complex needs. This ensures that children are safe and protected from harm.

Staff have a good understanding of children's complex health needs, and they respond to them effectively. As a result, parents have a high degree of confidence in the staff team's ability to care for their child safely. One parent said, 'I can't fault them. The staff are fantastic. They meet my child's needs wonderfully.'

The day-to-day care of children is well organised. Managers ensure that staff have clearly defined tasks and that staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff work collaboratively to provide children with consistency of care.

Staff receive specialist training to support them to meet children's complex health needs. There are robust systems in place to ensure that medication is administered to children safely.

Staff understand risks to children's safety, and they manage these risks well. However, some risks to children are not robustly assessed, and there is no written guidance for staff to refer to. This does not promote a consistent response. A recommendation has been made to improve practice in this area.

Incidents that require staff to use physical interventions to manage situations are very rare in this home. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of the children and are skilled in deescalating situations safely and effectively.

Children benefit from consistent routines and boundaries during their short stays. For example, children are supported to adopt consistent bedtime routines. One parent said, 'Being able to access short stays has been life changing for us as a family. Coming to the home has changed [child's name]. I have seen so much progress. Her communication is better, she gets less frustrated and she is sleeping better.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

This home benefits from effective leadership. The registered manager is suitably experienced and qualified for the role. She is supported by two experienced assistant team managers, and together they form an effective and visible management team.

The manager is very knowledgeable about children's needs. She demonstrates a child-centred approach to children's care. The manager is a good advocate for children and families. Her flexible approach to the provision of short breaks has supported families to continue their caring role. One professional said, '[Child's name] visits to the home have been vital in helping her remain in her family's care.'

Staff are motivated and express pride in the home. They are committed and enthusiastic about providing children with fun activities and new opportunities during their short breaks.

Staff spoke positively about their roles and the support they receive from their managers and colleagues. One member of staff said, 'Managers are great – I can't tell you how good they are. They are amazing and very approachable.'

Staff receive regular training that equips them with the skills to undertake their roles effectively. The majority of the staff team hold nationally recognised childcare qualifications. There are good communication systems in place, which promotes teamworking. However, team meetings are not always held regularly. A recommendation is made to address this.

There have been periods when the home has been short staffed due to the necessity for staff to self-isolate because of COVID-19. This has resulted in some children's short breaks being cancelled. The manager has tried hard to minimise the impact of this on children and some short breaks were rearranged.

The home's statement of purpose has been updated, but a copy of this has not been supplied to Ofsted. This does not comply with regulation, so a requirement has been made to address this.

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— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	8 July 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children's care plans detail the child's full support needs and how staff should respond to them. This is specifically in relation to children's personal care needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.2).
- The registered person should ensure that all known risks to children are assessed and that actions to mitigate risks are recorded on the child's record. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5).
- The registered person should ensure that staff team meetings are held regularly and that records are kept of those meetings. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11).

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: 1231405

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: PO Box 78, County Hall, Fishergate, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Michael Nunn

Registered manager: Tracey Morris

Inspector

Sophie Thomson, Social Care Inspector

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