

1241782

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority-run children's home. It is registered to provide care for up to six young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. This is the home's first inspection since moving premises.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 May 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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.

Date of last inspection: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because

- Young people's risk assessments do not contain enough information. They do not include all known risks and sufficient guidance for staff. This does not fully protect young people's safety and well-being.
- Some young people experience bullying by other young people who live in the home. Staff have completed some good pockets of work, but this is not well-coordinated and monitored.
- Staff do not prepare young people for independence well. Clear plans are not in place and the support is not targeted to each young person's needs
- Staff do not track all aspects of young people's health and so young people have mixed health outcomes.
- Young people who are not engaged in education, training or employment do not take part in structured activities during the day. This does not help them to develop good routines or to build on their skills and confidence.
- Care planning is not always good. Sometimes, young people move into the home when impact assessments say that this will not be appropriate for the children already living there. This affects young people's progress and experiences.
- Monitoring systems are not wholly effective. As a result, managers do not always identify and act on practice issues, patterns and trends. This limits the home's progress and development.
- Not all staff receive regular supervision or have an annual appraisal.
- Staff do not have individual training plans which promote their development. As a result, they do not keep all relevant skills and knowledge up to date.

The children's home's strengths

- Most young people develop positive relationships with staff. They can identify trusted adults who they can talk to. This helps them to feel safe and cared for.
- Young people say that they like living in this home. They enjoy different activities and have some fun times.
- When young people move in, staff give them a warm welcome and help them to settle in.
- Some young people make very good progress from their starting points. For example, one young person is doing very well at college and now has ambitions to go to university.
- Staff engage parents well and support young people to maintain relationships with people who are important to them. Parents are pleased with the quality of care their children receive.

- Because of the prompt action of staff, some young people's high-risk behaviour was dealt with well. This protected young people and others from harm.
- Good working relationships with the police and social workers promote young people's welfare and development.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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N/A		
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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
8: The education standard In order to meet the education standard the registered person must— (2)(a)(viii) help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; (ix) help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment. (Regulation 8(2)(a)). In particular, the reasons why a child is on a reduced time-table are clearly explained in the child's relevant plans and, when young people are not in education, training or employment they take part in structured activity during the day.	05/06/2017
10: The health and well-being standard In order to meet the health and well-being standard the registered person must ensure that— (1)(a) the health and well-being needs of children are met. (Regulation 10(1)(a))	05/06/2017
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure— (2)(a) that staff— (i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; ((iv) manage relationships between children to prevent them	05/06/2017

from harming each other. (Regulation 12(2)(a)). In particular, risk assessments contain sufficient information about all known risks including strategies to manage these risks.	
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must— (2)(f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(2)(f)(h))	05/06/2017
14: The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure that children— (1)(a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14). In particular, ensure that young people's written plans contain information about all aspects of their needs and care.	05/06/2017
33: Employment of staff Ensure that the registered person ensures that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development, receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience, and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, all staff receive supervision regularly, a clear procedure sets out the frequency of supervision, and individual development plans set out required training for staff.	05/06/2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Most young people develop positive relationships with the staff. Young people can identify the staff members they get on particularly well with and they will talk to staff about some of their worries. Staff listen and take steps to respond to young people's concerns. Building trusted relationships helps young people to feel valued and cared for. Young people say that they are happy living in this home and want to stay.

Young people receive good support to help them to keep in touch with the people who are important to them. Some arrangements are complex. Staff work hard to manage these arrangements safely and sensitively.

When young people move in, staff give them a warm welcome and help them to settle in. Where possible, young people visit the home before moving in. This gives them the opportunity to have a look around, meet the staff and other young people. Good introductions help allay young people's anxieties. Young people confirm that they receive a guide to the home. This helps them to understand what they can expect.

Young people take part in a range of leisure activities. Young people enjoy trips to the cinema, play golf and football with staff, and go climbing. Some young people pursue their own interests. For example, one young person enjoys going to music gigs with his friends. Staff encourage young people to try new things while having fun. This builds young people's confidence and self-esteem.

Some young people's behaviour affects the progress and experience of other residents. For example, two young people have been bullied and intimidated. Although staff took some action, young people felt scared and upset. Two young people continue to antagonise each other and staff know that they have to be vigilant. Some young people join together to cause disruption in the home and in the community. This undermines young people's progress, safety and welfare.

Education outcomes vary. Two young people have not accessed education, training or employment for some months. Staff work with the young people to organise different opportunities. However, two young people do not take these up, or if they do, they do not maintain them. One young person attends school part-time, but the reasons for this are not reflected in his plan. When young people are not in school, at college or in work, they do not take part in structured activity. Staff do not provide young people with clear plans and so some young people do not develop good routines, and say that they are bored. Staff do not work with all young people effectively to help them to re-engage with and progress their learning, or to take up employment. This may affect young people's life chances.

Some young people do make progress with their education. A young person now engages in more structured lessons which will help with his learning. Another young person has aspirations to go to university. He is making great strides at college to achieve this aim.

Staff promote some aspects of young people's health, but not all. Staff ensure that all young people register with a dentist, doctor and optician. However, not all young people attend their routine appointments. Staff have worked hard so that young people access specialist help, where needed, to support their emotional well-being. With help from staff, a young person has attended a specific health appointment, which in the past he has been reluctant to do. This shows he has made some progress. Young people also improve their self-care skills. Young people's plans and records do not contain sufficient information about their individual needs. As a result, not enough guidance is given to staff and young people about the steps needed to improve specific health and development needs. This includes sexual health and healthy eating. An inconsistent

approach to health does not fully promote young people's well-being.

Young people develop some independence skills. Young people can use public transport, shop wisely and cook simple meals. Young people have a personal adviser and are beginning to talk with them about future plans. However, written plans do not outline young people's strengths and needs, and do not set out how these needs will be met. As a result, staff do not target their support to meet young people's individual needs. This does not help to prepare young people for their next steps and does not demonstrate good care planning.

Regular young people's meetings and everyday conversations enable young people to have their say about day-to-day life in the home. They say what leisure activities they would like to do and what food they would like to eat. Young people attend their review meetings and so contribute to discussions about their future plans.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

This inspection has identified some good safeguarding practice. Managers and staff took prompt action when young people displayed some high-risk behaviours. They made it clear to young people that their behaviour was unacceptable and unsafe. Staff also explained what the possible consequences would be, should the behaviour continue. They worked well with partner agencies to ensure that a consistent approach was followed, and early indications are that this behaviour has now ceased. Prompt action and collaborative working promotes young people's safety and welfare.

Staff complete safeguarding training and keep this up to date. Staff know how to escalate concerns should they need to. They also know how to respond appropriately to young people if they disclose abuse. This helps to protect young people from harm.

Restraint happens rarely. Staff de-escalate potentially challenging situations effectively. They implement a system of praise and reward, as well as consequences to help young people to manage their behaviour. A restorative approach helps young people to understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others.

Largely sound recruitment processes help to maintain a safe workforce. This prevents unsuitable people from working in the home. The manager takes steps to undertake some checks on those people who have lived and worked abroad. However, there is no procedure to follow about this to ensure consistency. The manager plans to work with the human resources department to rectify this. As a result, the manager is taking steps to further develop safer recruitment practice.

Routine health and safety checks in the home help maintain a safe environment for young people to live in. The grounds of an empty house next door, which is owned by the local authority, contain some potential hazards. Young people can access these grounds and so they are exposed to unnecessary risk. Managers need to act to reduce this risk and protect young people.

Most young people do not go missing or absent often. When they do, staff generally take action to find young people and ensure their safe return. Staff request return home interviews. If these do not take place, then managers escalate their concern to senior

managers within the authority. This has led to improvement. As a result, young people now have more opportunity to meet with someone independent of the home to talk about why they went missing and what happened while they were away.

One incident record lacks detail about the action that the staff took to make contact with a young person who had been missing overnight. During another incident, staff did not take all possible action to satisfy themselves that a young person was where he said he was. This does not show due diligence towards young people's welfare at all times.

Risk assessments vary in quality. They do not include information about all known risks, including e-safety, bullying and anti-social behaviour in the community. Furthermore, they do not contain clear strategies about how to reduce these risks. As a result, managers and staff do not have well-developed strategies to keep young people safe. For example, there is no clear plan about how to manage two young people's behaviour in the community, even though they are known to cause mischief and upset to members of the public. Staff do not respond robustly to e-safety concerns and this leaves young people vulnerable and at risk of harm.

Some young people experience bullying by other young people who live in the home. Although staff have completed some good pockets of work, this is not well-coordinated and monitored. For example, records reflect significant gaps in individual work with young people about bullying. This shows an inconsistent approach and does not help young people to manage their relationships with each other.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home's manager registered with Ofsted in December 2016. He has completed the registered manager's award but does not have a copy of his certificate. He has applied for a new certificate and will forward this to Ofsted, on receipt, to show that he has the required qualification.

The home relocated from a next-door property in January 2017. Managers and staff involved the young people in the move and this helped with a smooth transition. Young people say that they are more than happy with their new home. It is modern, bright, comfortable and spacious. Living in a well-maintained home helps young people to feel valued. It also improves their feeling of self-worth.

The registered manager reports significant events to the relevant authorities, including Ofsted. He takes action when serious incidents happen to ensure that young people are safe and protected.

A stable staff team gives young people consistency. That said, managers do not deploy staff to meet the individual needs of young people. For example, a young person has made a reasonable request to stay out later sometimes at the weekend. Staff rotas do not allow for this and this does not reflect personalised care. Managers do not provide enough guidance for staff on how to plan and manage day-to-day routines. As a result, they do not support young people to take part in structured activities when they are not in school. This does not show good leadership.

Staff say that the manager is supportive and approachable. New staff receive a good

induction to the home. As a result, they familiarise themselves with key knowledge to help them in their new role. There is no policy on the frequency of staff supervision. As a result, it is not clear how often staff should receive this. Not all staff receive supervision regularly or in line with their individual needs. Gaps in supervision highlight that some staff do not have the opportunity to reflect on their practice. Furthermore, not all staff receive an annual appraisal of their performance. As a result, managers are unable to review staff performance well and promote their professional development.

Some aspects of training are good. For example, safeguarding training is up to date, as is behaviour management and first aid. Staff access a range of online courses to broaden their knowledge. However, this inspection highlighted some shortfalls in staff training. Only four staff have completed e-safety training and staff still have to complete bullying training. Furthermore, four staff need to refresh their medication training. Staff do not have individual development plans. As a result, training is not targeted to meet their needs or the needs of young people.

Leaders and managers work well with partner agencies. Parents, social workers and the police say that staff communicate with them effectively. When concerns arise, they meet to review what has happened and consider the best steps to take next. This shows that managers review young people's plans and take action in response to known risks.

The registered person does not always make child-centred decisions about young people coming to live in the home. Impact assessments show that the registered person does consider the needs of current residents. However, he does not always act on these considerations. For example, impact assessments do not set out how staff will manage known risks and needs. Furthermore, the manager admitted a young person to the home even though the impact assessment said that this would not be 'productive'. This decision went on to have a significant impact on other young people. Poor care planning compromises young people's welfare and progress.

In recent months, external monitoring systems have improved. The independent visitor talks to young people, staff, professionals and parents. This helps to inform their view about whether the home safeguards young people and promotes their welfare. Reports accurately reflect what is going on in the home. The registered person wants to maintain robust independent oversight. To achieve this, he will meet with the visitor periodically to review the quality of their work.

Internal monitoring systems are not consistently good. The manager fails to identify gaps in young people's written plans. As a result, staff do not target their support according to individual need. This impedes young people's progress. Some recording systems make it difficult to track events in the home. For example, records about bullying incidents are not clear. This makes it difficult to identify exactly what has happened and when. This does not promote young people's welfare.

Managers have plans to improve internal monitoring systems. These include scheduling in some protected time for monitoring and a children's home manager coming to the home to carry out more quality assurance. This shows a commitment to improving the quality of service and care provided to young people.

Six requirements are raised to secure improvement.

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: 1241782

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Lancashire County Council, P O Box 78, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Paul McIntyre

Registered manager: Mark Davies

Inspector(s)

Jackie Line, social care regulatory inspector
Marie Cordingley, social care regulatory inspector

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