

1241782

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home. It is registered to provide care for up to six young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection date: 8 March 2018

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 3 May 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Two compliance notices were issued following significant concerns in relation to safeguarding and leadership, identified at a monitoring visit on 8 June 2017.

A further monitoring visit took place on 5 July 2017, where it was judged that the provider had taken sufficient action to address the notices.

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.

Young people have made good progress in a number of areas since the last inspection. Some young people have experienced highly positive outcomes in areas such as education, social development and in reducing high-risk behaviours. Young people themselves attribute their progress to the care and support they receive. One young person said, 'I don't think I would have achieved half as much as I have without this place. I think it's brilliant.'

Most young people are making good progress in education or vocational training. One

young person has recently received a conditional offer for a place at his preferred university. The registered manager has arranged some additional private tuition, to assist him to prepare for his exams in the summer. Another young person has overcome frequent episodes of anxiety and a lack of confidence, to successfully engage in an apprenticeship. The home ensures that there are well-detailed timetables in place for two young people who are awaiting new further education placements. The timetables are developed around the young people's specific interests and learning needs, and ensure that their days are well structured. This addresses a requirement made at the last inspection.

A requirement was made in relation to meeting young people's health and well-being needs at the last inspection. During this inspection, it was found that this requirement has been suitably addressed. One young person has received extensive support and encouragement from staff to engage with specialist health practitioners in relation to a long-standing health issue. This has included assisting the young person to overcome an acute fear of needles and medical procedures. As a result, this young person is now receiving specialist treatment, which will continue to benefit him into adulthood.

Significant concerns were noted at the last inspection, in relation to the behaviours of some young people. Some young people were engaging in high levels of anti-social behaviour, which were causing issues in the local community and creating risks to the young people's safety and well-being. A requirement was made of the provider to take steps to assist young people in developing socially aware behaviour. Evidence is available to demonstrate that consistently positive work has been carried out with young people, which has resulted in incidents of anti-social behaviour ceasing over recent months. A police community support officer, who is closely involved with the home, commented that he no longer receives any concerns about the behaviour of young people and complimented staff on this positive outcome. A young person expressed pride at the improvements he has achieved and said, 'I've been good for six months now. They [the staff] are all proud of me. Staff help me be good and I don't get in trouble. It's better not to be in trouble all the time.'

Young people are safer due to the care and support they receive. For most young people, there is a significant reduction in high-risk behaviours, such as being missing from home or offending. A parent and a social worker both commented on the proactive approach of the home in safeguarding young people and protecting them from harm.

Managers and staff are aware of the risks to young people's safety and well-being and have detailed plans in place to manage these risks. Action is taken to help ensure that risk assessments and risk management plans are frequently updated to reflect current information. Improvements have been made to this process since the last inspection, but there is room for further development. A small number of examples were noted where risk assessments lacked details of more recently available information. This could result in staff not being aware of newly identified risks and as such, a requirement is raised.

Two young people are soon to leave the home in planned moves towards independence. Staff ensure that the young people benefit from appropriate opportunities to gain the

practical and social skills necessary to successfully live independently in the future. However, while it is evident that young people receive a good level of day-to-day support in preparing for independence, there has been a delay in some young people's formal pathway planning. The registered manager has taken steps to address this with the local authority, but an earlier, more proactive approach may have proved more effective. This area has been identified for development by the registered manager. A recommendation is raised to support further improvement.

The positive relationships built with young people is a strength of this home. A social worker commented that the registered manager and staff were clearly committed to making the home a place where young people wanted to be. A young person described the staff as 'always nice and kind' and said, 'They never get mad.'

It is evident that efforts are made to assist young people in expressing their views and opinions. For example, the registered manager recently arranged for an interpreter to accompany a young person whose first language is not English to a dental appointment, so that the young person could be fully informed and involved in decisions about his dental treatment.

Managers and staff have a good understanding of young people's individual needs and work well to ensure that these are met. A very good level of support has been provided to one young person to ensure that he is enabled to practise his religion. This has included introducing the young person to a local faith leader and community. The young person has been closely encouraged in his cultural practice. For example, staff have purchased cookbooks in accordance with the young person's cultural needs and ensure that he is provided with a diet in accordance with his religion.

Positive one-to-one work is carried out with young people, which gives them the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings about matters that are important to them. However, records of this work could be improved to provide a clearer overview of each session that has taken place.

A requirement was raised during the last inspection in relation to the appropriate admission of young people. This was as a result of evidence being identified that the provider had previously made decisions to admit young people, without carefully considering their needs or the impact they may have on young people already living at the home. During this inspection, the registered manager demonstrated good awareness of the need to approach admissions of new young people in a considered way. The registered manager shared a number of measures, which included better planning when intending to admit new young people to the home. However, it was found that there are some aspects of impact risk assessment that still require further improvement. The level of information obtained and considered when assessing the suitability of a young person for the home is good. However, the rationale for admitting young people or how identified risks are to be managed still needs to be clearer. For example, there were obvious risks relating to the recent admission of a young person. These risks were considered but measures agreed to manage the risks were not as clear as they could be. As such, this requirement will be repeated.

During the last inspection of the home, a requirement was raised in relation to the provision of staff supervision, as it was evidenced that staff were not receiving supervision in line with regulation or the organisation's own policy. During this inspection, it was confirmed that this requirement has been suitably addressed. Records show that all staff benefit from regular supervision and appraisal, within the appropriate timescales. The registered manager was able to give a number of examples of occasions when it had been identified that specific staff members were in need of additional support and that this support had been provided. It was also noted that the registered manager has improved monitoring systems to ensure that he can promptly identify if any staff member has not received supervision within appropriate timescales.

An independent person monitors and reports on the progress of the home each month. However, the provision of these reports to Ofsted is inconsistent. At the time of the inspection, reports of visits carried out during several recent months had not been received. This undermines the ability of the regulator to monitor the service and assess risk, and as such means that young people's well-being is not promoted. A requirement is raised in relation to this matter.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/05/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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
12: The protection of children standard The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account	06/04/2018

information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (Regulation 12 (1)(2))(i)(iii))	
14: The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, ensure that the impact that new young people will have on the existing group of children is fully considered, including strategies to manage any potential risks. (Regulation 14(1)(a))	06/04/2018
44: Independent person: visits and reports The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44(7)(a))	06/04/2018

Recommendations

- Specifically relating to staff debriefing; the registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- As the home will have a day to day understanding of young people's capabilities and needs, children's homes staff will have a valuable contribution to make to the pathway planning process. They should actively seek to make the fullest contribution, working with other relevant persons. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.28)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62 paragraph 14.4)

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 differences 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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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

Marie Cordingley, social care inspector

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