

1241782

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural needs.

There is a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager in place, who has been registered since December 2016.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 June 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/05/2017	Full	Requires improvement to

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 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 the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(b))	30/07/2018
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 13(1)(b)(2)(a))	30/07/2018
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14(1)(a)) In particular, that the ability to meet the needs of a young person and the potential impact of their placement on other young people are carefully considered, prior to agreeing to admit them.	30/07/2018
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. 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(1)(3)(a)(b))	30/07/2018

Recommendations

- Specifically relating to sanctions and 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)
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people who live in this home benefit from personalised and responsive care. As a result, most young people make extremely good progress in many areas. This promotes their general and emotional well-being.

The ability of the registered manager and staff to develop highly positive relationships with young people is a strength of this home. This is particularly the case with young people who have previously struggled to engage and have experienced high numbers of placement breakdowns. One young person who has recently made excellent progress said, 'In other places I have been, you get some good staff and some bad staff. Here, they are all good. They are all sweet.'

The registered manager and staff have high aspirations for young people. Young people's progress and achievements are recognised and celebrated. This includes celebratory events where young people are awarded certificates and prizes, which give them a sense of pride.

Young people are strongly supported to express their views and wishes. Young people

are encouraged to access independent advocates, where appropriate. An external interpreter who works with a young person whose first language is not English, described how staff always ensure that arrangements are in place for him to attend meetings and appointments with the young person.

Young people receive highly effective support in relation to their religions and cultures. The home has taken steps to introduce one young person to a local faith leader and community. Appropriate arrangements were recently put in place to support the young person in observing Ramadan. This included ensuring that he had access to meals during non-fasting hours. The young person described how staff regularly took him to a specialist grocery store a considerable distance away, to enable him to purchase much-loved foods. He described the staff as 'so very kind and generous'.

The registered manager and staff strongly support young people to achieve in education. One young person, who recently moved on to independence after living at the home for several years, is looking forward to starting at university in the autumn. Another young person who has not engaged in education before is now attending tutor sessions regularly, and has requested increased provision.

Some young people are reaching the age of independence. On the part of the placing authority, formal pathway planning is inconsistent and has not been achieved within expected timescales. The registered manager continues to pursue this vigorously and has escalated requests for the matter to be addressed. In the meantime, the home could improve the development of internal plans to help prepare young people for their moves. A recommendation is raised to support this improvement.

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

Young people say that they feel safe and that they can speak with staff about any worries. One young person described how he had shared some concerns with staff about his friend. He said, 'They listened and explained things to me and then I felt better.' An external professional commented, 'I believe that this home was the best place in the world to bring a very frightened young boy. They have really cared for him.'

The registered manager has made some improvements in how risks to young people's safety and well-being are assessed and managed. Individualised risk assessments are well detailed and constantly updated with new information when it is available. However, in recent weeks, two young people have increased their engagement in high-risk behaviours, such as going missing from home and being involved in anti-social behaviour. Staff have expressed concerns that they are not able to keep the young people safe when they are missing in the community.

The registered manager is proactive in ensuring that return interviews are carried out with young people following periods when they have been missing. However, the details of these interviews are not always made available to the registered manager and staff.

This means that important information, which could inform future missing-from-home risk assessments, could be missed.

The registered manager works closely with external professionals to safeguard young people who are at risk of child sexual exploitation. However, the information and advice contained in external assessments and risk management plans could be more clearly incorporated into the home's internal care plans.

General safeguarding practice is sound. At the start of their employment, all staff receive safeguarding training which is renewed on an annual basis. Appropriate action is taken when any safeguarding concerns are raised, which includes appropriate discussions with the relevant agencies.

Young people receive positive support to learn how to manage their emotions and behaviours. Incidents of physical restraint are low, despite this being a large home that cares for young people who often have complex behavioural needs. The low numbers of incidents demonstrate the skills of the registered manager and staff in de-escalating potentially volatile situations.

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

There is a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager in place, who has been registered since December 2016. He is supported by two experienced assistant managers. The managers demonstrate strong values and high aspirations for the young people in their care.

Staff speak highly of the management team and report that they feel well supported. One staff member commented that the registered manager had recently emailed staff thanking them for their hard work. She said, 'Things like that mean a lot.' There have been no changes to staffing since the last inspection, which indicates a well-settled team. This also results in stability and consistency for young people.

Following the last two inspections of the home, a requirement was made in relation to care planning for young people. This was due to evidence that the admissions of new young people were not always carefully considered. Since then, another young person has been admitted to the home, contrary to a very clear impact risk assessment stating that she could not be adequately safeguarded, and that her admission was highly likely to have an adverse impact on young people already living in the home. The decision to admit the young person despite this information demonstrates a continued breach of this regulation.

Minutes of meetings show that the registered manager was not present at all discussions relating to the admission of this young person, and did not make the final decision to admit her. This is not effective leadership on the part of the provider. The registered manager has a day-to-day understanding of the home, the skills of staff and the needs of young people, and as a result should be fully involved in admission decisions.

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has continued to make improvements to systems for monitoring the safety and quality of the service. Examples include enhanced analysis of young people's patterns of behaviour so as to enable any learning points to be identified. The managers also clearly demonstrate their ability to challenge external services and escalate concerns in circumstances where young people are not receiving the necessary support. This helps to ensure that young people benefit from a constantly improving service.

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.

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: PO Box 78, Lancashire County Council, Preston, Lancashire PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Paul McIntyre

Registered manager: Mark Davies

Inspector

Marie Cordingley: social care inspector

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