

1278968

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides short breaks for children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in August 2018.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

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: 22 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/03/2023	Full	Outstanding
23/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
18/11/2019	Full	Good
27/02/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy spending time with each other at the home and enjoy a range of healthy and fun experiences with their peers. They have access to many resources, including board games, musical instruments and computer consoles, and they enjoy playing these with their peers. This helps to develop children's creative and social skills.

Children say that they gain a lot from staying at the home. One child said that their short breaks at the home have helped them to work through some significant emotional trauma. They said, 'Before I came here, I kept going missing; I didn't listen at all, but since I came here, I have only gone missing once. I think more about what I do wrong and focus on not doing it.' Another child said, 'One thing I have got [from short breaks at the home] is I feel more responsible now. I've even started to tidy my room, as I realised I was letting other people do it for me. I feel more independent and responsible now. I've also learned to walk away from arguments at home; before, I would shout and get angry.'

Children's case records are written to the child, which helps to bring their experiences to life. This also means that if children want to access their records in the future, they will be able to make more sense of their time at the home. In addition to this, staff have completed specific training in relation to case recording. This helps staff understand how capturing the lived experience of children can impact on children when they access their records later in life.

Parents can access the 'Breaking the Cyclone' parenting courses in small groups. Feedback from this course is positive, and one parent said that as a result of accessing this course, their family 'are able to connect better as a family'. The parent went on to say the course has also helped develop better parent-child relationships. This parent said that they now consider the background to behaviour as opposed to just dealing with the behaviour itself. This helps to promote good emotional well-being and positive role modelling.

Children's religious and cultural needs are understood and met by staff. Staff ensure that children are supported to observe their religions. For example, staff consulted with a family member to gather information about their child's religious needs so that staff understood these well. This means that children are able to feel included in appropriate religious and cultural activities and have their individual needs catered for.

Staff access a good level of mandatory training to ensure that they are suitably trained and consistent in their practice. Staff also complete training to help support children's individual needs. This includes training in relation to working with children from transgender communities. However, the staff team would benefit from

additional training to help them understand the lived experience of children experiencing bereavement.

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

Children rarely go missing from the home. There has been one missing-from-home incident since the last inspection, and this was managed well by staff. Staff followed the children's missing-from-home protocol, and the child returned home safely.

Children build trusting relationships with staff. Positive interactions were observed between children and staff, demonstrating that children feel safe and settled while staying at the home. One child said that when they stay in the home, it feels like their 'mini home'.

Children's risks are identified and understood by staff. This means that staff are able to keep children safe. Staff know and understand children and why they may behave in certain ways. They are skilled in de-escalating challenging situations, which has resulted in there not being a need for the use of physical intervention.

On two occasions, children have had short breaks at the home on an emergency basis, which is contrary to the statement of purpose. On both occasions, this compromised the care and experiences of children who were due to stay at the home for the weekend. Some children who had already arrived at the home or were on their way were asked to leave. This had a negative impact on the children, and their families' experiences were poor.

Staff say that they value supervision and appraisals, which take place on a regular basis. However, supervision does not routinely evaluate the experience of the children and the impact of their behaviour on staff. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that children's development and progress are monitored and any issues are identified and addressed in a timely way.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has experienced some changes in the leadership and management since the last inspection. This has been a difficult time for the staff and leaders. The deputy manager has been singled out for being able to provide clear stability for the team during this time. The deputy manager was able to ensure the service continued to provide good-quality care for the children using the service.

Staff know the children well and work hard to create a warm and homely environment for them to stay in. The leaders and managers work hard to create a space for children to socialise and develop interpersonal skills.

External professionals provided positive feedback about the care that children receive. One social worker said that the staff are forward thinking and dynamic when meeting children's needs. This includes supporting children to attend school

and rebuilding relationships with family members. One independent reviewing officer said that they would worry if the support ended for one child, as they are making such good progress. The strength of relationships with social workers means the children receive a multi-agency support plan.

The home does not have clear monitoring and review systems in place. There is a lack of monitoring and review of case files, which means evaluation of the progress made by children is not evidenced. Furthermore, any shortfalls identified in records are not routinely followed up to ensure improvement is made.

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, The 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 care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iii)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children are admitted to the home in line with the statement of purpose and that children's overall experiences are not compromised as a result of emergency placements.	28 March 2024
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. Case records must be kept—	28 March 2024

if the child dies before attaining the age of 18, for 15 years from the date of the child's death;

in cases not falling within sub-paragraph (a), for 75 years from the child's date of birth;

securely in the children's home during the period when the child to whom the case records relate is accommodated there; and

in a secure place after the child has ceased to be accommodated in the home.

(Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d))

Specifically, this relates to ensuring all children's records are up to date, signed by the author and reviewed regularly to evidence progress and compliance.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff supervision enables staff to reflect and act upon how their own feelings and behaviour may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.15)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, 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: 1278968

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Michael Nunn

Registered manager: Steven Searle

Inspector

James Meeks, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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