

1278968

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. It is registered to provide short-stay care for up to four children who are at risk of family breakdown. Outreach support is also provided to families by staff from the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since August 2018.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2023

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 23 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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: outstanding

Children stay in an incredibly nurturing and supportive environment that meets their needs. The house is decorated, furnished, equipped and maintained to a very high standard. Children have everything that they need to have a comfortable and enriching stay.

Staff have the right personal qualities, skills and confidence to build positive and trusting relationships with children. They know the children extremely well. Staff make sure that children receive the highest quality of care that meets their needs, and achieve extremely positive outcomes.

Managers plan children's introductions to the home sensitively. They consider the child's emotional well-being, family circumstances, and ability to process information and deal with change. The length of introductions to staff and the home is based on the child's needs.

Before coming to stay, children and their family visit the home. This opportunity to have a look around, meet staff and see what is on offer to them, helps children to make informed choices about whether they want to spend time at the home. A social worker said that after visiting the home 'the child and their parents were ecstatic about the support that is available to them'.

Each child's stay is extremely well planned and organised so that they get the most out of the experience. Staff help children to express their views, wishes and feelings and have them considered.

Staff's exceptionally high-quality care and professional practice are contributing to improving children's lives. Staff provide children with a safe place to get away from stressful situations in their family. Children make sustained progress in improving their health and emotional well-being, education, personal care, communication, friendships, eating habits and family relationships.

Staff help children to develop a stronger sense of emotional well-being. They support children to explore their identity and interests, and feel safe enough to be themselves.

Above all, staff provide opportunities for children to have fun, new experiences and take part in activities that they may not be able to do with their family. Staff support children to develop their interests and talents, such as skateboarding and hair and beauty. They support children to take part in local leisure and cultural experiences, including going to the circus, seaside, farms and the countryside. Importantly, they help children to take part in structured activities in their local area, such as cadets, that they can continue to do after they no longer stay at the home.

Children's records provide a detailed picture of their experiences and wishes and feelings. The records are written in an engaging way that shows children's measurable progress. However, staff do not always evaluate the effectiveness of direct work with children, its impact or what needs to happen next to support the child.

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

Children stay in an extremely safe and nurturing environment. Staff have the confidence and skills to help children, even the most vulnerable, to feel safe and develop a stronger sense of well-being. Children feel comfortable staying at the home and do not go missing from it.

Staff's research-based professional practice results in sustained improvements in children's lives. Staff support children and their families to repair their relationships, reduce the risk of harm and continue living together successfully.

Staff work well with families and external professionals to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to keep children safe at home and in the community.

Staff understand and manage risks to children's welfare exceptionally well. They engage with children successfully. They build trusting relationships with children that promote positive behaviour and make a difference to children's lives. A child wrote to staff to say, 'Thank you for supporting and understanding me. You make me feel that I'm worth something. I now know that I need to speak to people about what is on my mind, so I don't do stupid things. I will try to handle my emotions differently.'

The strength of staff's relationships with children reduces the risks to their welfare. Staff help children to understand their emotions and behaviour. Together, they find positive ways for children to have their emotional needs met, instead of them engaging in risk-taking behaviour to meet those needs. Invariably, children who stay at the home become increasingly safer from the risk of harm from sexual exploitation, violence, self-harm, substance misuse and using the internet.

Staff provide children with emotional warmth and consistent boundaries. They help children to understand and manage their feelings and practise skills to resolve conflict safely.

Staff work positively with parents and carers to resolve problems. They provide parents with advice and support to understand their child's needs and their behaviour, and to develop their parenting skills. By supporting parents in this way, staff promote children's safety and well-being.

Leaders and managers follow safer recruitment procedures to make sure that staff are safe and suitable to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has been away from the home since February 2023. They plan to return to work before the end of March 2023.

In the registered manager's absence, an acting manager and the two assistant managers are running the home. This management team provides highly effective and inspirational leadership. They are ambitious for children and influential in achieving positive outcomes for children and their families.

Leaders and managers create a culture of high aspiration and inclusivity. They have high expectations of their staff to provide the highest quality of support that improves the lives of children and their families.

Leaders and managers make sure that they only provide support for children whose needs they can meet in accordance with the home's statement of purpose.

The home achieves a high level of engagement from both children and parents. Staff build supportive relationships with children's families. They engage collaboratively with children and families to work through problems and find solutions. Social workers speak very highly about the quality of care provided and its positive impact on family life.

Leaders and managers provide staff with excellent support and guidance. Staff use practice-related supervision and team meetings to reflect critically on children's progress and their own professional practice. Staff receive high-quality training, which is tailored to the needs of the children who they are supporting.

Staff are highly motivated and skilful in supporting children and their families to make positive changes. They work together cohesively to provide a very high standard of support and protection.

Well-planned staffing arrangements make sure that there are always enough knowledgeable, experienced, skilled and well-trained staff available to support each child.

Leaders and managers use thorough internal monitoring systems, including a detailed internal audit, to understand the strengths of the home and drive improvements in supporting children and families.

However, the external monitoring by an independent person does not provide in-depth scrutiny of the home. The independent person does not visit the home when children are staying. This limits opportunities for the independent person to see children, get their views, observe their relationships with staff, and understand their lived experience of staying at the home. Furthermore, the independent person's

monitoring reports do not evaluate critically the home's effectiveness in safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

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 ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5)) In particular, ensure that the independent person visits the home when children are present and make a rigorous and evaluative assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.	30 April 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that records of direct work with children provide a significant contribution to the understanding of children's needs, views, lived experience and progress, and inform their plans. This includes making sure that children's records always include an analysis of the effectiveness of direct work with children and what needs to happen next to support children's development. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraphs 14.5)

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

Responsible individual: Michael Nunn

Registered manager: Steven Searle

Inspector

Nick Veysey, Social Care Inspector

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