

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 registered to provide short-stay care and accommodation for up to four young people. The service is provided to young people who are at risk of family or foster placement breakdown, or those requiring support to return home. Intensive outreach is also provided, within and from the home, by the staff team.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 February 2019

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Young people's internal care plans and risk management plans should outline the support they require, taking account of the young person's gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, any disability, their assessed needs, previous experiences and any relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.2)
- The registered person must specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a young person is missing from care or away from the home without permission and how staff should support the child on return to the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping. Information about the child must always be recorded and organised in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people receive individualised care which meets their needs and supports their progress. Young people enjoy staying at this home. They have good experiences during their stays and opportunities to make friends and have fun.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of young people's strengths, abilities and needs. Staff are able to confidently describe the support that young people require. However, in young people's internal care plans this information could be clearer, to support consistent practice.

Feedback from young people about the home is consistently positive. Their comments include, 'It helps me clear my mind', 'The staff are kind when I am staying, and they talk to me when I feel down' and 'Everyone is kind and polite, and I feel like I am well cared for.'

Young people develop excellent relationships with staff, who know them well and have a good understanding of their needs. A further strength of this home is the ability of staff to develop highly positive relationships with the families and carers of young people.

Children are supported to express their views and share their wishes and feelings about their care. Good-quality direct work gives young people the opportunity to have meaningful discussions about things that are important to them. One young person described how staff had helped her to talk about a traumatic event, and how this, in turn, enabled her to engage with therapeutic support.

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

The arrangements to keep young people safe are good. Young people report that they feel safe and well cared for. Risks to each young person's safety and well-being are identified and understood. Staff show good awareness of the measures that they must take to maintain young people's safety, and are able to provide examples of how they carry out these measures as part of young people's day-to-day care.

The registered manager ensures that effective links are maintained with external agencies, such as the police, child sexual exploitation workers and children's social care. This helps to ensure that young people have access to specialist services when they need it and, as such, promotes their safety and well-being.

Safeguarding practice is sound. Staff demonstrate the ability to identify safeguarding concerns and take appropriate action to ensure that all the relevant agencies are promptly informed. This helps to ensure that matters are quickly addressed and that young people are protected from further harm.

There have been no incidents of young people going missing from this home since it began operating. In discussion, the registered manager advised that none of the young people currently using the service are thought to be at high risk of going missing. However, it is recommended that individualised guidance is developed for any young person who has a history of going missing from home so that, if this does occur, staff have quick access to the necessary information.

Staff work well with young people to help them to develop an understanding of personal safety. For example, direct-work sessions take place with young people in areas such as internet safety and personal relationships. This helps young people to learn about keeping themselves safe and well.

Staff have a good understanding of young people's behaviours and adopt a positive approach to behaviour management. There is a strong focus on recognising and rewarding positive behaviours. Although the young people who use the service may present some behavioural challenges at times, there has been no requirement for staff to physically restrain a young person. This demonstrates the skills of staff in de-escalating challenging situations. This consistently positive support helps young people to develop safer and more appropriate behaviours over time.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

There is a suitably experienced and qualified manager in place, who is registered with Ofsted. The registered manager communicates a clear vision for the service and high aspirations for the young people in his care.

Young people, parents, carers and external professionals speak extremely highly of the home. People describe a responsive and caring service that has, in its short time of operating, had a positive impact on the lives of young people and their families. A social worker said: 'I have felt that nothing the family or myself asks for is ever too much. A young person of mine has gained confidence and self-esteem, which has resulted in her relationship with her mother improving.' Another social worker described the home as having a 'massively positive' impact on families and spoke of a positive outcome for one family that had been at the point of breakdown prior to accessing the service.

Staff are highly motivated and extremely positive about the service. They say that they feel valued and well supported, and describe being encouraged to share their ideas and views about the development of the service. Staff also describe a culture of reflection and positive challenge. Staff are encouraged to provide feedback about the management of the home through the 360-degree feedback programme. One staff member described the open and reflective culture as 'a breath of fresh air'.

There is a positive approach to staff training and development. In addition to a comprehensive core mandatory programme, staff are provided with training in supplementary areas such as positive parenting and restorative justice. This helps staff to develop skills not only to support young people's very complex needs but also to develop highly effective relationships with young people's parents or carers.

The registered manager demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusion. Young people are routinely encouraged to give their views about the service and be involved in the running of the home. For example, one young person recently took part in the interviews for prospective staff. Feedback is regularly encouraged from all stakeholders. The registered manager ensures that all feedback is carefully analysed for potential learning opportunities.

The registered manager ensures that the home is led in a way that is responsive to people's needs. For example, one young person's carer recently experienced an emergency which meant that the young person required immediate support. The registered manager promptly tailored a care plan of intensive support for several days, which avoided the young person being admitted to a care home. The carer described this as a 'godsend' and commented that the manager and staff had gone 'above and beyond' in the support that they provided.

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 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: 1278968

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Michael Nunn

Registered manager: Steven Searle

Inspectors

Marie Cordingley, social care inspector
Sophie Thomson, social care inspector

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