

2788446

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a local authority. It is registered to care for two children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

There were two children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in October 2024.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 April 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since the home opened, three children have moved into the home and one child has moved out. The child moved on from the home in a planned way. Staff support them to settle into their new home and maintain relationships should they wish.

Moves into the home have not always been managed well and the children have not been suitably matched to each other and in accordance with the home's statement of purpose. This has led to a period of instability in the home, which has impacted on both children.

Staff sickness has led to a lack of consistency for the children living in the home. Staffing shortages have meant that agency staff are used regularly. As a result, children are being cared for by unfamiliar staff. This has impacted on their continuity of care.

The child in the home said that they are happy and are developing trusting relationships with the staff. Staff work hard to form trusting relationship with children. This assists staff to have difficult conversations with children and explore any worrying issues that may be impacting on them.

Children are supported to spend time with their family and friends. Families are welcomed into the home. This helps children to maintain important relationships and increases their sense of identity.

Staff encourage children to attend education regularly, and continue to do so when children are reluctant to attend. However, children are receiving less education than their peers. One child has a tutor in the home and has made progress and had the opportunity to sit an exam.

Staff support children to maintain their physical and emotional health. However, a child continues to use electronic cigarettes in the home and has not been sufficiently educated or challenged by staff.

The home is clean, tidy and has sufficient space for the children who live there. However, the doors to the back garden are locked with a key and children cannot go out into the garden without staff unlocking the door for them. This also includes some of the windows upstairs. This does not ensure that children live in a comfortable and safe environment.

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

Children say that they feel safe and are happy. They are building trusting relationships and staff are supporting children to better understand and manage their emotions to enable them to develop better coping strategies.

Risk management and behaviour support plans are reviewed on a regular basis and are detailed. However, risks associated with being online and the use of electronic devices have not been considered and important conversations with children are not taking place. Additionally, risk plans in relation to supervising children during the night have not been adhered to by staff. This means that children are not always effectively safeguarded.

Children have gone missing from the home. Staff are proactive in their attempts to ensure that the children return home safely, but staff have not always been aware when a child has left the home during the night. Managers have taken action to address this and have increased the number of staff in the home.

Staff work collaboratively as part of a multi-agency team with local authority colleagues, children's families and external professionals. One parent said, 'There is nothing the home could do more.'

Staff undertake bedroom searches when required. However, staff have not recorded the time the bedroom search was undertaken, or which staff were present. This is not in line with the home's policy.

Door alarms are routinely used on the children's bedroom doors at night. The management team has a clear rationale for this. However, written consent has not been received from children's social workers.

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

The manager is child centred and nurturing. They are supported by a deputy manager and, together, they have high aspirations for the staff team. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas to develop in the home.

Staff supervisions and team meetings take place on a regular basis. However, both lack reflection on the children's needs and presenting behaviours. This does not help staff to have formal opportunities for reflection and professional challenge.

Training has been undertaken to meet the needs of the children. The staff value the training that has been provided. This improves consistency in staff's practice.

The home's statement of purpose has not been sent to Ofsted as required by regulation. This limits the regulator's oversight of the care being delivered.

Staff feel supported by management and like working in the home. They are committed to improving outcomes for children.

When external complaints have been made, leaders and managers have taken appropriate action to address them. Leaders and managers are committed to improving relationships with the local community.

Leaders and managers work closely with external agencies to ensure that the children receive necessary support. Regular meetings are held to share information, and all professionals contribute to the overarching care plan and the best approach to support the children.

Leaders and managers do not have effective monitoring systems in place. This does not ensure that there is continuous improvement. However, leaders and managers can identify opportunities for further development.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Home (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to The Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards. 'The registered person must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iv)(v)(vi)(ix))	20 June 2025

In particular, the registered person must ensure that any child moving into the home is able to live safely with the child who already lives in the home and in line with the home's statement of purpose. The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.	
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 information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and 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)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all safeguarding procedures are followed consistently.	20 June 2025
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and 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; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the home’s statement of purpose is understood. They should also ensure that careful matching of children is undertaken when children move into the home.	
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; children can access all appropriate areas of the children’s home’s premises; and	20 June 2025

any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b))	20 June 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child's bedroom is searched the home's policy is adhered to. (Guide to Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16/17, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person and staff should encourage children to take a proactive role in looking after their day-to-day health and well-being. This specifically relates to the use of electronic cigarettes and the risks to the child's health. (Guide to Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.10)

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: 2788446

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Claire Dudley

Registered manager: Sarah Ramsey

Inspector

Michelle Snape, Social Care Inspector

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