

SC035428

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides short-stay and emergency placements for children who are experiencing difficult periods in their lives. In many cases, children have complex needs and have experienced multiple placement breakdowns prior to coming to the home.

At the time of the inspection there were two children living in the home.

We last visited this setting on 22 June 2021 to carry out an inspection. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 August 2021

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 22 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: Inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Three compliances notices were issued to the provider following the last inspection of the home on 22 June 2021. These notices were in relation to breaches of

regulation 12 – the protection of children, regulation 13 – leadership and management, and regulation 14 – care planning.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/06/2021	Full	Inadequate
21/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
18/09/2018	Full	Good
29/05/2018	Interim	Not judged

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

One child moved out of the home and two children have moved in since the last inspection. The first child settled well and started to make good progress. However, his progress was interrupted and he was quickly drawn into some high-risk behaviours, such as going missing, when a second child came to live at the home. The original risk assessment for the placement of the two children together indicated that there were some known risks. Risk management strategies were put in place, but these were not effective, and children continue to be at risk of harm.

Children spoke highly of the staff and described positive relationships. One child commented that staff were always 'nice and kind' to him. This child's parent also expressed a positive view of the home and the standard of care provided.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of children's needs. There is evidence of some positive one-to-one work with children, helping them to think and talk about the things that are important to them. For example, staff have spent time with one child, planning ways in which he can be supported to manage difficulties in settling at night.

Children are encouraged to engage in positive activities. In addition, there has been some positive work with children engaging them in local charity work. This helps children to develop a sense of community and increases their skills and confidence.

One child recently left the home following a sustained period of not engaging and being missing. Due to the child being missing, there was limited opportunity to assist him in preparing for his transition. Furthermore, the child was moved late at night. This was not a good ending for the child and did not prepare him well for a positive start to his new home.

Leaders and managers have not addressed serious weaknesses identified at the previous inspection, and are not ensuring that all children receive effectively planned care and have positive experiences moving into or out of the home.

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

Significant shortfalls identified at the inspection in June 2021 have not been sufficiently addressed. The manager has recently reviewed children's risk management plans and provided staff with updated information. However, information remains inconsistent and, in some cases, confusing. This means that staff do not have consistently clear and accurate guidance about how to maintain children's safety.

There has been an ongoing failure to ensure that risks to children's safety and well-being are identified and assessed. For example, a child was involved in a serious incident while travelling in a vehicle with staff. Despite this, there was no risk assessment or risk management plan developed for future journeys.

The manager is taking steps to ensure that staff are provided with training across a relevant variety of topics to help them safeguard children. This programme is ongoing and includes areas such as child exploitation and supporting children who may harm themselves.

The location of the home was not properly considered when completing an impact risk assessment for one child. Specific risks relating to nearby areas were not sufficiently considered or planned for.

The manager has taken action to address some unsafe areas of the environment identified at the last inspection. This has helped to ensure that children's health and safety is protected against avoidable hazards. No new concerns were identified during this inspection about the environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There is a manager in post who registered with Ofsted in July 2018. Staff are highly supportive of the manager and describe her as child focused and strongly committed to improving outcomes for children.

Staff say that they receive good levels of support from the management team. Supervision is completed on a regular basis. However, some debriefs carried out with staff following significant incidents lack meaningful reflection. This means that potential learning may not always be identified.

It was identified during this inspection that decisions to offer children places at the home are not always well considered. This means that children's progress and experiences continue to be negatively affected by inappropriate matching.

A poor management decision and ineffective use of resources recently led to a situation where a child was not provided with suitable staffing levels overnight. This resulted in the child not being effectively safeguarded and being placed at risk of harm. Furthermore, following this incident the matter was not suitably reviewed, which meant that learning was not identified or actioned.

A requirement was raised in the last inspection regarding the quality of records in the home. Standards of recording continue to be variable and, in some examples, remain of a poor standard.

The manager has failed to meet a requirement made at the last inspection in relation to the notification of significant events. There has been failure to notify Ofsted about one significant event and, in another example, a notification was made

but lacked important information. Failure to notify Ofsted of important events does not support children's well-being.

Some action has been taken to meet requirements set out in compliance notices issued to the home following the inspection in June 2021. However, there are several matters which remain outstanding. Leaders and managers have not yet implemented an effective monitoring system which means that their ability to identify shortfalls in practice and improve are limited.

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 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; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(d))	17 October 2021
*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— ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(d)(h))	17 October 2021
*The care planning standard is that children—	17 October 2021

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 children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(b)(2)(a))	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (b)(c))	17 October 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	17 October 2021

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: SC035428

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

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

Responsible individual: Gwyneth Monk

Registered manager: Hena Begum

Inspector

Marie Cordingley, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021