

SC035428

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is managed by a local authority. The home provides care for one child who may have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager was registered in April 2022.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

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 widespread failures that mean children's welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and experiences of children and young people are poor.

Date of last inspection: 7 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/12/2021	Full	Good
17/08/2021	Full	Inadequate
22/06/2021	Full	Inadequate
21/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

There was one child living in the home at the time of this inspection. As part of this inspection, inspectors also viewed information relating to another child who has recently moved out. While some progress has been made by children, shortfalls in safeguarding and care planning have significantly impacted children's overall experiences and safety.

The home is used as a 'crisis provision' and, as such, the manager and team are not always fully prepared to care for the children placed. Staff told inspectors that they have no say in which children are placed in the home. Impact risk assessments completed by the manager evidence concerns over the suitability of children placed. This undermines the process for the admission of children into the home and means that the staff team has not been able to manage children's complex behaviours and needs effectively.

Identified shortfalls in the care planning for children mean that they are not receiving effectively planned care that is addressing all their needs. Staff do not always fully understand children's individual needs and do not have access to children's up-to-date plans. This is having an impact on children's progress and safety.

Staff did not go into one child's room for a period of nine days. During this time, the child did not leave their bedroom. Staff were not clear on the reasons why they could not enter this child's room or the agreed strategies or interventions to support the child during this period. This resulted in the child's bedroom not being maintained to a sufficient standard and posing a significant risk to the child's health, safety and well-being.

Staff have supported children to spend time with their family in the home. This helped one child to make some progress in leaving his room. Staff have been creative in supporting family time, understanding the importance of building relationships between children, their families and staff. As a result, children have benefited from positive family time and their experiences have improved.

Despite the difficulties in meeting children's complex needs, staff have worked hard to improve children's experiences through relationship-building. The relationships formed with children and support received from staff meant that one child was able to tolerate a haircut, following a prolonged period when this was not possible. This child moved on from the home with improved self-esteem and confidence.

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

Significant shortfalls were identified regarding the help and protection of children.

Staff are not equipped to keep children safe from the risks posed by items in the home's physical environment. For example, one child found items they then used to self-harm. This has led to them being admitted to hospital and undergoing several medical procedures. This is detrimental to the child's emotional, mental and physical health.

Inspectors found a lack of clarity and assessment around the specific physical aids required for the child living in the home. This means that the child's independence is hindered, and that managers and staff cannot be assured that they are meeting the child's physical health needs.

Risk assessments are not robust. A lack of clear and coherent assessments for each individual high-risk behaviour means that staff do not have specific protocols or procedures to follow in the event of an incident. This specifically relates to fire-setting and travelling safely in the car. A lack of clear, detailed guidance that supports staff to manage all risks posed hinders children's safety. Clear guidance is necessary when managing the highly complex behaviours of children placed in this home.

The manager has been proactive in escalating her concerns to partner agencies and senior managers. Staff have shown commitment and resilience in responding to and managing children. However, the lack of clarity and direction from other agencies has led to children not receiving the required support and has meant that children's health and safety has been significantly impacted.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Staff do not have sufficient in-depth knowledge to fully understand the complex needs of children placed at this home. This is leaving staff and children vulnerable and at risk of harm. Staff have not had self-harm training, learning disability training or mental health training. Some staff told inspectors that they do not feel equipped to meet the complex needs of the children. This compromises children's well-being, given their history of self-harming behaviours and concerns surrounding their emotional and mental health.

Inspectors found shortfalls in monitoring and reviewing processes. Children's local authority care plans were not available or were not up to date. This means that managers were unable to clearly evidence the progress made by children. Shortfalls were also found regarding the monitoring and review of staff files. Gaps were identified in staff suitability checks. This means that leaders and managers cannot be assured that those working in the home are safe to do so.

Inspectors observed staff showing genuine warmth and affection towards the child. Interactions between the child and staff were positive. The child also said that she was happy and felt cared for. The manager and staff are working hard as a team to meet children's needs, given their skills sets and the support they have available to them. However, the complex needs of the children placed have meant that staff have been unable to meet or manage children's needs and risks effectively.

The registered manager is skilled, knowledgeable and passionate about the care provided in this home. She has continued to escalate her concerns about the need for significant intervention from partner agencies to help and support managers and staff to care for the children placed. At the time of the inspection, senior leaders accepted the concerns raised and the need for increased support for those working in the home, to manage the needs of children placed.

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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. 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; 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)(vi)(b)(d))	27 November 2022
*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 staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.	27 November 2022

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h))	
*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 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. that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c))	27 November 2022
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children’s home; if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(d))	27 November 2022

*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, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Gwyneth Monk

Registered manager: Jeanette O'Neill

Inspectors

Nicola Clements, Social Care Inspector

Natalie Bennett, Social Care Inspector

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