

SC035428

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Monitoring visit

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.

Inspection date: 19 October 2021

This monitoring visit

A full inspection of the home was carried out on 17 August 2021. During this inspection, significant concerns were identified in relation to the leadership and management of the home, placement matching and safeguarding practice. Compliance notices and a restriction of accommodation notice were issued as a result of the inspection. Inspectors carried out this monitoring visit on 19 October 2021 and found that the compliance notices had not been met. Since the last inspection, both children have left the home. The provider has adhered to the restriction of accommodation notice and no children have been admitted to the home during this period.

Children's risk assessments still contain contradictory information around their needs. For example, risk assessments do not always contain accurate information about the required staffing levels for children.

In the period since the full inspection before the children moved out, strategies within children's risk management plans were not consistently followed. Inspectors found that staff were not adhering to children's risk assessments in relation to staffing levels or when children were missing from home. In one instance, the correct staffing levels for a child were not adhered to, leaving the child and member of staff at risk. The internal investigation regarding this issue remains ongoing.

The new manager has, however, completed some positive consultation work with parents to gain their views around the risks for their children. This has not only been helpful in ensuring that risk assessments are accurate, but it has also helped to develop relationships with parents.

The new manager has started work since the last inspection, but has not yet been able to meet with all the staff as a team, to gain an understanding of their development needs or reflect on the shortfalls that have led to the ongoing enforcement work at the home. Team-building is an area that requires further development prior to the admission of children. In addition, of the 11 staff identified to work at the home, only four have a recognised childcare qualification. The responsible individual for the home is in the process of reviewing this, to ensure that there are adequate numbers of suitably qualified and experienced staff working at the home.

Internal monitoring of the home is not yet effective. The new manager has started to review documents and has considered some patterns and trends in relation to previous placements that were made at the home, but this is an area of work that requires further development.

In some instances, records were difficult to find, with little evidence of any direct work that has been completed with children.

Transition arrangements for the children who left the home were poor. Transition plans for children could not be evidenced. One child who was told he was being moved that day, went missing from home when he was told about the plans for his move. This was not a positive ending to his stay at this home and or a positive start to his new placement.

It is, however, positive that the authority has decided to reduce the number of registered beds to one. This will be helpful for staff to have a better focus on the needs of the child in placement and to complete more focused areas of work in the short period of time that children stay at this home. Ofsted has been notified of all serious incidents at the home since the last inspection.

As a result of the inspectors' findings, the three compliance notices have not been met. Three further notices have been issued, under regulations 12, 13 and 14, and the restriction of accommodation notice remains in place.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/08/2021	Full	Inadequate
22/06/2021	Full	Inadequate
21/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
18/09/2018	Full	Good

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))	10 November 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))	10 November 2021

*The care planning standard is that children— 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))	10 November 2021
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 (1)(b)(c))	10 November 2021

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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: post vacant

Inspectors

Julia Toller, Regulatory Inspection Manager
Emma Thornton Social Care Inspector

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