

SC035439

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a local authority and provides care for up to three children who may have emotional and social difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living at the home. Two of the children were spoken to by the inspector.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2023.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 September 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: 29 May 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

This home was judged inadequate at the full inspection on 29 and 30 May 2025. Following this inspection, Ofsted issued two compliance notices under section 22A of the Care Standards Act 2000. These related to regulation 12, the protection of children standard, and regulation 13, the leadership and management standard.

Since the last inspection, a monitoring visit has taken place to review the actions taken by the provider to meet the compliance notices. At the monitoring visit on 27 August 2025, these notices had been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/05/2025	Full	Inadequate
23/10/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/06/2024	Full	Inadequate
06/06/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Children are accessing education in line with their specific needs. One child was looking forward to starting a construction course. One child had started at a new school this term. Staff had devised a home timetable of learning for another child whose school plans had not yet been finalised by the placing authority and the school.

Staff ensure that children's health needs are met. Children who require emergency medical attention due to risk-taking behaviour are treated quickly and appropriate medical advice and guidance are sought. Staff support children to take prescribed medication and liaise with health professionals to arrange health reviews.

Staff encourage and support children to be involved in activities that they are interested in. Staff recently organised an ice-skating trip for one child. This child has also enjoyed having a manicure and a spa day and was making plans with staff to have a new hairstyle.

Care planning for children who are almost 18 and due to move on from the home has been delayed. One child did not have up-to-date information about their move and did not know who their personal advisor was. A senior manager actioned these outstanding tasks during the inspection and the child was visited to discuss their plan, including arrangements for identifying suitable living accommodation.

Staff have not been consistent in supporting children to develop their independence skills in preparation for moving on from the home. When children can do basic tasks for themselves, such as cooking, managing money and travelling independently, staff do not build on these skills in a meaningful way. They do not carry out consistent direct work sessions with children to ensure that they are gaining full confidence in these areas.

Staff work with professionals to ensure that children get the support they need. One child is receiving support from a care experience worker, who helps the child make sense of their past. In addition to this support, the child is also being supported by the complex safeguarding team. These sessions help the child to understand risks in the community and potential risks from people online.

Staff support children to visit family and friends, irrespective of the distance. Family time plans are assessed in partnership with children's placing local authorities, to ensure there is effective safety planning. One child's family member said that they can see their child maturing and having more focus with daily tasks. This is having a positive impact on their relationship with their child. Another family member said that they would like more updates from the home about their child's daily routines.

The home has been redecorated in some areas since the last inspection. However, since then, further damage to the home has occurred when children have been feeling upset or frustrated. All three children's bedrooms were clean and tidy and personalised to their taste and contained their personal items such as books and toys.

Some areas of the home were damaged and required repair, such as a cracked internal windowpane and minor damage to walls. A requirement has been raised to address this. A senior manager actioned these repairs during the inspection. Most of the tasks were promptly carried out and a date for the windowpane to be fixed was discussed.

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

Risk assessments provide staff with clear guidance on what to do in the event of a serious incident. Staff follow plans and accompanying guidance when serious incidents occur.

When children go missing from the home, staff follow protocols to locate the child and report to relevant agencies in a timely manner. When children return home, staff spend time with them, offering them support and advice. When serious incidents such as children going missing have occurred, multi-agency meetings take place to consider the risk of harm and safety plans are implemented which consider children's vulnerability in the community and online.

When physical intervention is used this is reasonable and proportionate to prevent further to harm to the child and others.

Managers do not always provide children with the outcome of complaints that they have made. One child said they had not received the outcome of a complaint they made following an intervention which had been investigated by senior managers. Senior managers were informed of this and made arrangements to discuss this further with the child.

Staff have regular discussions with children, including keeping safe in the community, emotional health and well-being, substance misuse and healthy eating. These sessions provide children with the opportunity to take responsibility for decisions making in their lives. However, these sessions lack professional curiosity and do not consistently encourage children to access additional support.

There have been two occasions when children have entered one another's bedrooms, and there have been concerns that the children have drunk alcohol. Staff intervened and a room search took place to establish if there were further risks to children. A record of the search has been kept, but does not explore the child's wishes and feelings about this search.

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

The registered manager was not present for the inspection. This was led by two deputy managers and a senior manager from the local authority.

Since the last inspection, leaders and managers' recording and monitoring systems have been reviewed and new systems implemented which make it easier for staff to follow and refer to policies when carrying out their daily duties. However, these changes are still in their infancy. This includes changes to documents such as handover records, room search logs and training records.

There have been challenges to staffing since the last inspection. These are now being resolved, and two long-standing members of staff have recently been employed as seniors. Most staff receive regular supervision. However, records of these sessions vary in quality. One member of staff who has worked in the home for several weeks had received supervision and was unsure who their supervisor was. Another member of staff said that their experience of supervision was positive, and they had an opportunity to reflect on their practice.

On one occasion, a child was aware and discussed the personal circumstances of a member of staff. The manager has since ensured that all staff complete professional boundary training. These discussions are reiterated in supervision and team meetings.

Staff are aware of the importance of maintaining professional boundaries when working with children, as well as ensuring that closed cultures do not emerge. They have knowledge of the whistle-blowing procedure and the procedures for reporting to external agencies when making a complaint.

Team meetings take place regularly and are well attended. These meetings provide staff with a forum in which they can discuss their views about changes that are taking place in the home. Staff have used team meetings to openly share their views about recent challenges, home improvements, staff morale, recovery, and resilience.

Staff do not always use handover times to read, share, and communicate full information relating to daily tasks. At times, this has led to inconsistency across shifts and tasks being carried over to the next shift.

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, The 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 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— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding; and ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1) (2)(b)(vii)(viii)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all rooms in the home are maintained and decorated to an acceptable standard, including repairs carried out to damage in a timely manner and items which could cause hazard or injury removed without delay.	3 October 2025
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.	3 October 2025

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) In particular, that children are consulted and supported to understand their plans for moving on from the home. Additionally, that children have adequate time to prepare to move on from the home, in line with the child’s placing authority planning arrangements.	
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development. receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(a)(b)(c)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff who are new to the home receive regular supervision in line with their induction plan.	3 October 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home’s policies on record-keeping and ensure that staff communicate with one another about all important information relating to children living in the home. This includes seeking children’s views following room searches and during handover time when staff are starting and ending shift. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,’ page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff demonstrate professional curiosity when talking to children about their lived experiences and their current circumstances to help children have a deeper understanding about what further support, they may

require. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 22, paragraph 4.10)

- The registered person should ensure staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures and that everyone working in the home understands their roles and responsibilities, including adhering to professional boundaries for the benefit of the children living in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 54, paragraph 10.20)

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: SC035439

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Tracey Sykes

Registered manager: Richard Lawler

Inspector

Michelle Greenhalgh, Social Care Inspector

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