

# 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 registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children or young people who may have emotional or behavioural needs.

**Inspection dates:** 7 to 8 August 2018

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

**requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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:** 8 February 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 08/02/2018      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 19/07/2017      | Full            | Good                    |
| 08/02/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 27/07/2016      | 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   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>The care planning standard</p> <p>In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure—</p> <p>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 (2)(a))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 07/09/2018 |
| <p>The protection of children standard</p> <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv))</p> | 07/09/2018 |
| <p>The leadership and management standard</p> <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 07/09/2018 |

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| <p>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;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f)(h))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                   |
| <p>Behaviour management policies and records</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (“the authorised person”)—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p> | <p>07/09/2018</p> |
| <p>Notification of a serious event</p> <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>07/09/2018</p> |

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))

## Recommendations

- Staff must help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home's support and, where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care. ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)

Specifically, ensure that written plans outline young people's needs, and detail how young people are being prepared for independence.

- Ensure that all children's case records are kept up to date. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20) The plan should:
  - detail the necessary management and staffing structure, (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff, to enable the delivery of the home's Statement of Purpose;
  - detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications);
  - detail the process for managing and improving poor performance;
  - detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33 (4) (b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home.

The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home’s manager. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 53, paragraph 10.8)

- Under regulation 6 (3) it is expected that in establishing whether the care meets the child’s needs, the child will be appropriately supported throughout the care and given opportunities to discuss the impact of the care, or any changes they feel they might need to it. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 18, paragraph 3.31)
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 45, paragraph 9.30)

## Inspection judgements

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

Outcomes for young people are mixed. The young people who are currently living in the home are making positive progress in a number of areas. For example, they are engaging in education, regularly enjoying positive activities and have good relationships with staff and each other. However, since the last inspection, two young people’s placements have ended at the home following periods of poor progression.

Managers do not make effective use of impact risk assessments consistently when considering the admission of new young people to the home. This results in some young people being admitted to the home who are not a good match with those already living there. Some young people have had negative experiences because the behaviour of other young people has had a negative impact on their daily lives.

Staff support young people to achieve in education. All of the young people who currently live at the home are achieving good attendance in education and positive outcomes at school. One young person has recently taken her GCSEs and is eagerly waiting to start at college after the summer holidays. She described a good level of support from staff throughout her exams, including the provision of a private tutor to assist her in a particular subject.

There are increasing efforts to support young people to express their views and to be involved in decisions about their care. One young person has recently been encouraged to work with an external advocate to help her make her feelings and wishes known about her future care clear. Direct work with young people, such as one-to-one sessions,

has increased in frequency. However, records of this work could be improved to demonstrate that things that are important to young people are consistently addressed.

The manager has reviewed the work that has been done with young people to prepare them for independence. Currently, young people's care plans lack detail about their individual strengths and needs in this area. The manager has recognised that improvement is required and has appointed an independence champion to oversee the support provided to each young person. In addition, young people will soon benefit from a formal independence programme, which will help to ensure that they receive the necessary practical support to prepare them for the next stage of their lives.

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

Managers and staff respond promptly to safeguarding concerns, such as disclosures that are made by young people. The manager ensures that appropriate discussions take place with relevant agencies. As a result, concerns are addressed quickly and this helps to protect young people from further harm.

Staff work hard to keep young people safe. However, young people's individual risk assessments do not always include relevant information. Some lack detail and context, and strategies for minimising risk are not always clear. This means that staff may not have the necessary information to promote young people's safety and well-being.

Shortfalls were identified in relation to the identification of and management of bullying within the home. One young person has experienced negative behaviour from other young people. However, incidents of bullying were not recorded in a way that could be monitored effectively. In addition, risk assessments in relation to bullying were found to be inaccurate and out of date.

The young people who currently live in the home are engaging well and do not go missing. However, there have been incidents where previous young people have been missing for significant periods of time. Records of these incidents demonstrate that staff work hard to locate missing young people and ensure that all the relevant professionals are informed. However, there are shortfalls in the way that incidents regarding young people who are missing are recorded. This means that the manager is not able to monitor these effectively. In addition, return home interviews have not been carried out consistently. This means that opportunities for learning from these incidents and to gain information to inform risk management plans have been missed.

Young people are supported to develop safe and appropriate behaviours. Each young person has an individualised behaviour support plan, which helps staff to understand their specific needs and strategies to de-escalate challenging situations. Incidents of restraint are not excessive, which demonstrates that staff support young people in a positive manner and are able to de-escalate most challenging situations.

However, records of restraint are not monitored effectively or consistently reviewed. This limits the opportunity to identify and respond to practice issues, patterns and trends.

Furthermore, debriefs are not consistently carried out with those who are involved in or witness to incidents of restraint. This means that staff and young people do not always have the opportunity to reflect or express their views with someone independent of the incident.

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

The registered manager retired in March 2018. A new manager has been appointed and is in the process of submitting an application to Ofsted for registration.

Young people, parents and staff speak highly of the newly appointed manager and describe her as approachable and supportive. External professionals report effective communication and express their confidence in the manager's leadership.

This home has a low staff turnover, which results in stability and consistency for young people. Staff express satisfaction with the support and training that they receive. During the period between the registered manager leaving and the new manager commencing at the home, some gaps in supervision have occurred. However, the manager has identified this and taken steps to address matters.

The manager has a positive approach to staff development and has made some positive changes, including regular training workshops. In addition, the manager has completed a training audit and taken steps to ensure that all staff receive mandatory refresher training, some of which has been identified as being out of date.

There are systems in place to enable the manager to monitor safety and quality across the service. However, these are not consistently used in an effective manner. Shortfalls in the monitoring of several areas, including restraints, episodes of going missing from care and risk assessments, were identified during this inspection. More effective use of monitoring systems will enable managers to better understand young people's experiences and identify and address areas in need of improvement promptly.

It was identified during this inspection that some significant incidents have occurred that Ofsted has not been notified about. A failure to ensure that Ofsted receives notification about significant events undermines the regulator's ability to monitor services effectively. This does not promote young people's safety and well-being.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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

**Responsible individual:** Paul McIntyre

**Registered manager:** Joan Osgood

## Inspector

Marie Cordingley, social care inspector

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