

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	08/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC035439
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Lancashire County Council
Registered person address	PO Box 78, County Hall, Fishergate, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual	Paul McIntyre
Registered manager	Joan Osgood
Inspector	Jackie Line

Previous inspection date	27/07/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. At the last inspection, two requirements and six recommendations were raised to improve practice. All but one recommendation have been addressed. This shows that the registered manager learns from inspection and implements change to benefit young people. Better quality internal and external monitoring means that the manager is readily able to track young people's progress, and identify and address shortfalls. Because of improved reporting and a consistent independent visitor, the external scrutiny of the home each month is more robust. This helps to protect young people from harm and promotes their welfare. The registered manager challenges the placing authority when it has been remiss in its responsibilities towards young people. For example, she liaised with the independent reviewing officer and senior managers to eventually bring about change to one young person's care plan. The registered manager also requests that social workers complete return home interviews when young people have been missing. When there are delays in this process, she escalates her concerns. Furthermore, she chases outstanding documentation such as personal education plans. Although some of these documents remain outstanding after recent meetings, the registered manager is aware of her responsibility to chase up completed plans. Consequently, she holds partners to account, ensuring that they do what is necessary to support young people's progress and welfare. Incidents of restraint remain low, with just three since the last inspection. Debriefs now take place with staff and young people by someone who was not involved in the restraint. As a result, all those involved have the opportunity to reflect on what happened and this promotes young people's welfare. Records show that young people now attend routine health appointments. Staff are encouraging one young person to have childhood immunisations that are still outstanding, and so they are helping her to overcome her difficulties with this. Staff respond well to young people who suffer with mental ill health. They work particularly well with relevant professionals to ensure that young people access specialist services where necessary. Staff follow advice and guidance appropriately to provide young people with the right support during times of crisis. As a result,	

staff meet young people's physical and emotional health needs well.

Young people's progress and experiences vary. Some young people continue to make good progress in all aspects of their development. For example, one young person has maintained full-time employment for several months and is thriving. She is beginning to make better choices about friendships and is enjoying a sustained period of stability. Another young person has not gone missing since April 2016 and this represents a significant improvement given her starting point. One young person has overcome difficulties at college and is engaging well on a different training course. Furthermore, with the help of staff she is now more able to manage contact with her family, and is looking forward to going on holiday with them.

Two young people have left the home due to safeguarding concerns relating to going missing and alleged criminality. Neither young person engaged successfully in education, despite the efforts of staff. Consequently, not all young people have made good progress since the last inspection. The manager recognised that the home could not safely meet their needs. The decision to identify alternative placements was made to safeguard the two young people and others.

Young people new to the home report positively about their experience of moving in. They receive a young person's guide and have the opportunity to visit beforehand. One young person told the inspector that the staff are sound, and he has been made to feel welcome. Well-managed introductions help to allay young people's anxieties and provide them with a positive experience of transition.

Young people receive some support to prepare them for independence. For example, one young person is particularly pleased with the help she has received from staff. This has resulted in her finding suitable accommodation to move on to when she reaches adulthood. The young person is appropriately excited and positive about her future. Written plans do not sufficiently outline young people's strengths and needs. As a result, work is not always targeted to help young people prepare practically and emotionally for their next steps. This is an area identified for improvement, so that young people are fully supported with all aspects of their transition to adulthood.

In the main, placement plans provide a good overview of young people's day-to-day needs. However, one plan has not been updated to reflect a change in contact arrangements. Another plan does not outline the strategies in place to support a young person's daily routines given their particular vulnerabilities. A recommendation is raised to improve the consistency and quality of recording.

Staff do not use a bound book to record controlled medication and this contravenes the home's medication policy. Furthermore, the home has not liaised with relevant professionals to establish a clear procedure for managing the administration of controlled medication, when young people spend time away from the home. This highlights vulnerabilities in the recording and administration of medication and does not fully safeguard young people.

A recommendation raised at the last inspection has not been satisfactorily addressed. The registered manager has not notified Ofsted of all significant events in line with regulation. This means that not all relevant people are informed, and the regulator cannot effectively carry out its monitoring function. A requirement is now raised.

The manager recognises that some areas of the home environment need to improve. For example, the corridor upstairs and some young people's bedrooms need painting, window frames which have been damaged need replacing and photographs on display in the home are not current. Plans for improvement need to be progressed so that the physical environment is maintained to a high standard throughout.

Information about this children's home

A local authority operates this children's home. This service is registered for up to six young people of either gender, aged between 11 and 17 years of age. The home cares for young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/07/2016	Full	Good
09/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/10/2015	Full	Good
14/07/2015	Full	Inadequate

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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
40: Notification of a serious event Ensure that the registered person notifies HMCI and each other relevant person without delay of all events outlined within this regulation. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))	15/03/2017

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure that the home meets the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met. Doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

Specifically, that the standard of decoration is good throughout the home, bedroom windows are replaced where frames are damaged, and photographs on display are up to date.

- Ensure that, as the home has a day-to-day understanding of young people's capabilities and needs, staff make a valuable contribution to the pathway planning process. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.28)

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

- Ensure that medicines are administered and in line with a medically approved protocol. ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)

In particular, controlled medication should be recorded using a bound book in line with the home's medication policy. Furthermore, advice should be sought from an expert such as a General Medical Practitioner, community pharmacist or designated nurse for children looked after, to establish a procedure for managing the administration of controlled medication when young people stay away from

the home.

- 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)

In particular, ensure that placement plans contain sufficient and up-to-date information regarding contact arrangements, and day-to-day routines where young people have specific needs.

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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