

# 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 is registered for 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: 29 and 30 May 2025

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>inadequate</b> |
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|                                                             |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | inadequate |
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|-------------------------------------------|------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | inadequate |
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**Date of last inspection:** 23 October 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 23/10/2024      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 11/06/2024      | Full            | Inadequate                      |
| 06/06/2023      | Full            | Good                            |
| 13/03/2023      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate**

Children receive inconsistent care from staff who do not always understand their needs.

Children do not enjoy a homely environment. The house feels institutional, with empty rooms, plain corridors and few personal touches. The manager is developing a plan for extensive renovations.

Children's access to education is varied. Two children are making progress and have goals for the future. While another child has not been in education long term.

Children do not experience consistent care. Children are frequently cared for by inexperienced agency or bank staff. These members of staff do not understand children's needs. Children are unable to get to know the adults caring for them.

Children are not being cared for by adults who treat them with empathy, dignity and respect. Staff do not talk about children with understanding or warmth. Children's written records are also sometimes written in unhelpful language. Staff left one child alone in the hospital for a long time, despite a request from the police for them to support the child. Children do not have good relationships with staff.

Staff sometimes advocate well on behalf of children. When one child's plans were not meeting his needs, staff helped to advocate for change. However, another child's experience of poor care planning has not been meaningfully challenged. Children receive inconsistent support.

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

Children are not safe. One child has suffered serious harm on more than one occasion because staff have failed to adequately protect them.

Staff do not know what to do to keep children safe. Staff do not know how they are expected to minimise risks, such as sexual exploitation, substance use and risks online. Staff also do not know how to whistle blow. Children are repeatedly exposed to the same risks.

Staff do not always follow children's risk assessments and care plans. Children's plans are detailed, and staff sign each document to say they have read and understood them. However, one child was missing for six hours without staff being aware they had left the home. In this instance staff did not follow the child's plan, including failing to check on the child. Children's basic safety is being neglected.

Staff do not show sufficient professional curiosity about children's lives and experiences. On one occasion a child told staff they were going to go missing and began getting

ready to leave the house. Staff did not take steps to keep them safe. On a separate occasion, staff took a child to visit a friend but failed to find out if it was safe for them to be there. The child was subsequently seriously harmed. Staff do not recognise or act on clear signs of escalating risk.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

Leadership and management of this home is poor. Children have frequently experienced unacceptable standards of care and been placed at risk. While leaders recognise these shortfalls, improvements are not being made at a pace which is helpful for children.

Leaders and managers do not use their oversight effectively. Fact finding exercises are completed quickly and generally identify shortfalls in staff practice. The responsible individual has also now put together an action plan to address concerns. However, there is no evidence that this has resulted in improvements for children.

Leaders and managers do not use an effective system to monitor staff training. Managers are unable to easily find out whether staff training is out of date and some information contained in the training matrix is inaccurate. Leaders and managers do not have useful oversight of staff skills.

Clinical support is used to inform care planning. However, staff do not take a trauma informed approach or show care and compassion for children. Leaders and managers are not leading the home in line with the statement of purpose.

The registered person has completed a review of care quality. This contains confidential information about children. Children's right to privacy is not being respected.

## 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     |
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| <p>*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—</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>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</p> <p>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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii) (iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b))</p> <p>The registered provider must ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children.</p> <p>The registered provider must make sure that staff have all the information they need and understand each child's individual needs and risks.</p> | 13 July 2025 |

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| <p>The registered person must make sure that staff understand how to identify escalating or emerging risks and respond quickly to keep each child safe.</p> <p>The registered person must make sure that staff care for children with empathy, curiosity and respect.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that staff provide day to day care which keeps children safe.</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 promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <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)(a)(c)(d)(f)(h))</p> <p>The registered person must make sure that staff understand and implement the approach to care set out in the home's statement of purpose.</p> <p>The registered manager must ensure that staff are providing consistent care to children.</p> <p>The registered person will have a system in place which allows them to keep good oversight of staff training.</p> | <p>13 July 2025</p> |

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| <p>The registered person must make sure that staff receive training which helps them to meet children's individual needs and keep children safe.</p> <p>The registered person will make sure that staff understand any training they complete and have the skills they need to keep children safe.</p> <p>The registered person will make sure that children are cared for by a consistent team, who know how to care for children and keep them safe.</p> <p>The registered provider must ensure that internal and external monitoring systems are used effectively to identify and address shortfalls in the care children receive.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                     |
| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare;</p> <p>treat each child with dignity and respect;</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must make sure that the standard of care children experience reflects that promised by the statement of purpose.</p> <p>The registered person must also make sure that children are treated with dignity and respect.</p> | <p>13 July 2025</p> |

\* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## **Recommendation**

- The registered person should make sure that their review of the quality of care provided by the home does not contain any confidential information, such as children's photographs or personal details. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.3)

## **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 address:** County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ

**Responsible individual:** post vacant

**Registered manager:** Richard Lawler

## Inspector

Nicola Shaw, Social Care Inspector

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