

## Children's homes –Interim inspection

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| <b>Inspection date</b>           | <b>12/01/2017</b>                                              |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>   | <b>SC035477</b>                                                |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>        | <b>Interim</b>                                                 |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>         | <b>Children's home</b>                                         |
| <b>Registered person</b>         | <b>Lancashire County Council</b>                               |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | <b>PO Box 78, County Hall,<br/>Fishergate, Preston PR1 8XJ</b> |

|                               |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Paul McIntyre</b>      |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Jacqueline Bumford</b> |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Jackie Line</b>        |

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| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>12/01/2017</b>           |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>None</b>                 |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                             |
| <p><b>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.</b></p> <p>This home was judged as <b>requires improvement</b> at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has <b>declined in effectiveness</b>.</p> <p>At the last full inspection, Ofsted raised five requirements and two recommendations. Although progress has been made in some areas, three out of the five requirements have not been met, two recommendations have yet to be addressed and further shortfalls have been identified at this inspection.</p> <p>Inappropriate admissions and poor care planning leave young people at risk of harm. Impact risk assessments do not contain sufficient detail or measures to manage the effect of young people moving into the home on those who are already resident. This does not protect young people. Furthermore, when it is identified that young people need to move on due to safeguarding concerns, this is not done quickly or effectively. As a result, some young people remain at risk of harm, while others experience multiple emergency moves in a short space of time. This inspection found that aspects of care planning are chaotic and fraught and consequently, young people experience uncertainty and anxiety. This does not promote young people's welfare.</p> <p>Although young people told the inspector that they currently feel 'eight out of ten' safe in the home, this has not always been the case. One young person informed the inspector that there have been times when he has felt 'zero out of ten' safe. This young person has been subjected to three assaults by other young people. He has reported feeling frightened in the home and scared of reprisals after he has spoken out about actions of other young people at the home. Another young person witnessed a serious assault in the home and was able to leave the home with other residents at night. Both incidents took place without the knowledge of staff, demonstrating ineffective supervision of young people by staff. These two incidents took place on his first night at the home and resulted in the young person feeling unsafe.</p> <p>Since the last inspection on 6 September 2016, young people went missing on 53 occasions, 31 of which took place in October. Although the number of episodes of going missing has now started to reduce, the fluctuating figures reflect the levels of instability that young people have experienced in recent months. One young person attributed his increase in episodes of going missing to the bullying that he</p> |                             |

experienced within the home. It is unacceptable that young people feel that they do not want to be in the home because they do not feel safe. This not only places them at risk of further harm, it compromises their welfare.

Managers and staff do not always identify and act on the signs that young people are at risk of harm. For example, records highlight that staff did not fully assess potential risks to a young person when he left the home with persons unknown, against their advice. Staff took no action and made no contact with the young person for five hours. This placed him at potential risk of harm. In another instance, staff failed to renegotiate plans and boundaries when a young person was found to be in possession of unexplained monies. As a result, she went out with friends and was then missing overnight. Although the quality of risk assessments has improved overall, one shortfall was noted. One young person's risk assessment did not provide adequate guidance for staff about how to respond when he goes missing. An inability to assess and manage risk does not adequately safeguard young people.

Young people's educational progress has declined since the last inspection. School attendance is particularly concerning. For example, one young person's attendance has dropped from 92% to 60% and another young person's attendance now stands at 24.5%. A lack of oversight and evaluation by managers means that they have failed to understand this decline. Further concerns have emerged. For example, one young person has been permanently excluded from school, and the headteacher commented on a 'clear and marked deterioration' in the young person's behaviour and in his attitude to learning. After a period of alternative education provision, another young person returned full time to the school where she had previously encountered difficulties. This transition was made without due planning and preparation. As a result, the start of the new term has not been without incident. A lack of planning, poor attendance and a lack of engagement is likely to seriously impact on young people's educational attainment and future life chances.

Occasionally, physical intervention is required to keep young people safe from harm. Restraint is used as a last resort and staff adopt the least intrusive methods that they can for the shortest time possible. Incident reports describe what happened but do not include all the information required. For example, debriefs with young people and staff do not routinely take place. This does not give people involved in the restraint, or those who are witness to it, the chance to reflect on what happened. Furthermore, it does not enable the manager to effectively evaluate whether the use of restraint is appropriate. This does not constitute wholly safe practice or good monitoring.

Poor internal monitoring systems mean that managers fail to understand the impact of the quality of care on young people's progress and experiences. Internal monitoring reports lack evaluation and do not take account of significant safeguarding incidents. Some case records still lack sufficient detail, despite this being a recommendation at the last inspection. Daily case records do not provide

clear information about how staff manage incidents or why they take the action that they do in response to events that happen. As a result, managers fail to identify and act on shortfalls in staff practice. Relevant plans lack sufficient detail about contact arrangements, potential vulnerabilities and measures in place to manage these. The manager's report following a six-monthly review of the quality of care provided in the home is detailed but is silent to the views of young people about their experiences. A lack of rigorous monitoring does not promote staff development, safeguard young people or promote their welfare.

Weaknesses remain in external monitoring processes. Additional training for independent visitors and changes to the reporting format have failed to bring about improvement. External monitoring continues to lack rigour because the visitor fails to accurately report on young people's progress and highlight key concerns. Furthermore, the independent visitor does not provide a clear opinion as to whether or not young people are effectively safeguarded and their well-being promoted. Poor quality assurance mechanisms fail to ensure that young people receive good standards of care, and do not support the home's improvement.

Some progress has been made since the last inspection. Young people continue to live in a physical environment that is safe and well maintained. The home is warm and welcoming with additional soft furnishings making it feel more homely throughout. Young people's bedrooms reflect their individual tastes. Maintaining a comfortable home to a good standard is an area of sustained improvement. This constitutes a positive aspect of young people's care.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff and have some good times. For example, one young person has tried salsa dancing and another has realised new talents in trampolining and climbing. A change in ethos means that regular activities such as these are not behaviour dependent. Consequently, the home is adopting an approach whereby staff do things that are good for young people and not because young people are good. This will help to develop young people's confidence and self-esteem, enable them to have fun and build on the positive relationships that they have with staff.

Young people enjoy contact with their families. They told the inspector that this is something that they recognise has continued to improving for them. Staff liaise well with birth families, and this good support enables young people to spend positive time with people who are important to them. For example, one young person was able to participate in a family holiday and this was something that she enjoyed.

Staff meet young people's health needs. They persist when young people refuse to attend appointments and this yields good results. For example, one young person attended the dentist on what was the fourth attempt. Another young person who lived in the home for a short time made progress with some aspects of his health because of the input from staff.

Staff have now received training in bullying, safe administration of medication, e-safety and self-harm. Access to relevant training broadens their knowledge base and develops their skills in key areas to be able to better support young people. Furthermore, all staff have had an appraisal, which enables them to focus on their individual performance and development needs.

Two young people currently live in the home and a reduced number of residents has helped staff to achieve some stability in recent weeks. Because young people's individual needs are highly complex, risks remain with respect to their behaviour and emotional well-being. As a result, this new found stability is in its infancy. The shortfalls identified at this inspection raise serious concerns. The majority of requirements and both recommendations raised at the last inspection have not been met. This reflects that leaders and managers fail to learn from inspection and improve standards of care. A lack of significant and sustained progress compromises young people's safety, experiences and progress. Six requirements and three recommendations are raised following this inspection. Because of the level of concern, Ofsted is taking enforcement action. Four compliance notices and a restriction of accommodation have been served to secure improvement.

## Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a local authority and provides care for up to six young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home takes emergency placements.

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement      |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 06/09/2016      | Full            | Requires improvement      |
| 18/05/2016      | Full            | Inadequate                |
| 07/03/2016      | Interim         | Declined in effectiveness |
| 13/01/2016      | Full            | Good                      |

## 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   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>8: The education standard</p> <p>In order to meet the education standard the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>(1) children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>(2)(a) that staff—</p> <p>(iii) understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; and</p> <p>(vi) maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement.</p> | 20/02/2017 |
| <p>12: The protection of children standard*</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure—</p> <p>(2)(a) that staff—</p> <p>(i) 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; and</p> <p>(iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 20/02/2017 |
| <p>13: The leadership and management standard*</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>(1)(a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>(b) promotes their welfare.</p> <p>(2)(f) 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; and</p>                                                                                                                                                                                               | 20/02/2017 |

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| (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
| <p>14: The care planning standard*</p> <p>In order to meet the care planning standard, the registered manager must ensure that children—</p> <p>(1)(a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>(b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 20/02/2017 |
| <p>44: Independent person: visits and reports*</p> <p>Ensure that the independent person produces a report about a visit ('the independent person's report') which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—</p> <p>(a) children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>(b) the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (3)(a)(b))</p>                                                                                                                                                                              | 31/03/2017 |
| <p>45: Review of quality of care</p> <p>(2) In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must enable and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>(a) the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>(b) the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>(c) any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (2)(a)(b)(c))</p> | 31/03/2017 |

\* These requirements are subject to a statutory requirement notice.

## Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that the arrangements for contact and any contact details are included in the placement plan agreed between the registered person and the child's placing authority and updated regularly. Specifically, plans must include measures in place to promote safe and positive contact. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.15)
- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Specifically, that staff accurately record in daily case notes the actions that they take and the

decisions that they make to safeguard children where necessary. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

- Ensure that any child who has been restrained is given the opportunity to be debriefed by a responsible adult who has not been involved in the incident. (Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5: Children's Homes, page 33, paragraph 2.104)

## **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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