

# SC035477

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to 3 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 3 children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2018.

**Inspection date: 19 March 2026**

**Date of last inspection:** 18 November 2025

**Judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

## Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The home environment has improved since the last inspection. One child's bedroom was observed to be clean and tidy, appropriately furnished and decorated to reflect the child's individual tastes. The home has recently been assessed for new kitchen units, and some minor repairs have been identified. One of these repairs was completed during the visit.

One child who spoke with the inspector confirmed their plans for the day and was observed having positive interactions with a range of staff. One child was at school during the visit, and another chose to remain in their bedroom and did not wish to speak to the inspector despite encouragement from staff.

When children are preparing to move on from the home, staff put transition plans in place and complete them in consultation with the child. One child's transition plan is particularly robust and outlines a gradual move from the home at the child's pace. This approach ensures that support remains in place for a set period, helping the child settle into their new environment while still having the familiarity and reassurance of staff to support them.

Leaders and managers work closely with the virtual school to ensure that children who require additional support receive fair access to services and can achieve outcomes comparable to their peers. One child has recently moved from part-time to full-time education, and another child who wishes to progress to further education has been supported by staff to visit a local college.

Staff provide children with advice and guidance on matters that affect their lives. These discussions help children to consider making positive choices about their health and wellbeing, as well as how to stay safe in the community and online. Additionally, staff promote age-appropriate independence tasks in line with children's wishes and feelings. This approach helps children to develop skills at a pace they feel comfortable with and gain success from.

When children go missing from home, staff follow agreed protocols and reporting procedures. On their return, staff carry out debriefs with children to understand the reasons for them going missing from home and to inform future support.

Children who are vulnerable to exploitation are supported by a range of external agencies. This collaborative approach means that contextual information is shared, which strengthens safety planning and risk management.

Not all staff spoken to during the inspection are clear about the reasons why a room search may take place, despite guidance being outlined in children's plans and in the

home's policy and procedures. Furthermore, staff do not always take appropriate action to complete effective room searches when children are experimenting with substances. A requirement has been raised in relation to this.

Staff support children who self-harm or express suicidal ideation. They seek appropriate advice and support and ensure that children receive medical attention when needed. When children require hospital admission, staff remain with the child to reassure them and provide them with some familiarity. Follow-up appointments take place to ensure that children receive appropriate assessments from therapeutic service providers.

When children require physical intervention, staff use this in a reasonable and proportionate way to keep the child and others safe.

The manager is dual registered to manage another home operated by the local authority. He has recently returned to work following a period of absence. During this time, the deputy manager has been pivotal in driving the positive changes that have taken place at this home since the last inspection.

Staff spoken to during the inspection reported feeling positive about working in the home. They have recently attended a development day and said that reconnecting with colleagues and sharing practice experiences was valuable. They also highlighted the importance of revisiting training on key areas such as medication and safeguarding.

Children's social workers provided positive feedback, highlighting that collaborative working is effective in ensuring that children's care plans remain current and reflect any emerging needs. One child's social worker reported that leaders and managers send children's records in a timely manner and that these documents are generally of a good quality and accurately reflect the children's daily routines.

Regular supervision takes place with staff, and accurate records of these meetings are kept. These records generally reflect discussions about work-related matters as well as any areas where staff feel they need additional support. However, not all supervision documents clearly identify when staff may require additional support to maintain a healthy work-life balance. A recommendation has been raised in relation to this.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 18/11/2025      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 25/02/2025      | Full            | Good                            |
| 19/03/2024      | Full            | Good                            |
| 23/03/2023      | 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, 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      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <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; and</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)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's plans contain clear strategies for staff to follow to reduce risks to children.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that staff understand and act in accordance with children's risk management plans, particularly in relation to carrying out room searches when children are under the influence of substances.</p> | 17 April 2026 |

### Recommendation

- The registered person should monitor and review the patterns and trends relating to staff, whether agency or directly employed, and be able to understand and, where possible, address any negative trends, specifically where staff may require adjustments to ensure a positive work-life balance. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.19)

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC035477

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Lancashire County Council

**Registered provider address:** PO Box 100, Preston PR1 0LD

**Responsible individual:** Emma McCracken

**Registered manager:** Jonathan Sewell

## Inspector

Michelle Greenhalgh, Social Care Inspector

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