

SC035477

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority home that provides care and accommodation for up to three young people who may have complex emotional and behavioural needs.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 November 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/06/2017	Full	Good
12/01/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
06/09/2016	Full	Requires improvement

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

Recommendations

- Where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child's needs (see regulations 5(c)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)

This specifically relates to obtaining relevant documentation or recorded agreements from partner agencies.

- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

This specifically relates to staff debriefs.

- The registered person must specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission, including how their actions must be recorded. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)
- 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: good

This home provides care for young people with complex emotional and behavioural needs. Before arriving at the home, young people have generally experienced a high number of placement breakdowns and have difficulty in developing positive relationships with carers. However, the registered manager and staff demonstrate the ability to engage young people in a manner that supports their personal growth and development.

Parents and external professionals involved in young people's care described highly positive outcomes for young people. A youth offending team worker commented, 'They have been fantastic with [X] and provided her with the stability and support she craved

but failed to get in any of her multiple previous placements. The support and guidance she has had from the home [have] made it all possible, and they have not allowed her to fail – picking her up at every step when needed and continually praising her for every little effort made.'

Staff work closely with health professionals who specialise in providing clinical advice and guidance in supporting young people's therapeutic needs. A worker from this team said, 'I think this is a very therapeutic environment for young people. Staff have a lot of insight. They recognise that young people find it hard to form relationships. They understand young people and are very resilient. They ask all the right questions and always take advice on board.'

Staff work positively with young people's families and help young people to repair fractured or estranged relationships with people who are important to them. A parent of one young person commented that he feels that the way his young person relates to him and others is much improved.

Staff have high aspirations for young people and strongly encourage young people's engagement in education. The registered manager has worked positively with external agencies to secure education placements for young people that match their needs and interests. As a result, some young people are engaging in education for the first time in several years.

Young people receive effective support in preparing for independence. There are examples of creative planning and positive joint working to ensure that young people move on to appropriate settings. Where necessary, young people who have left the home continue to be supported by staff on an outreach basis, to increase their chances of succeeding in an independent setting.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people are supported by a dedicated staff team that has a good understanding of safeguarding and the risks to individual young people's safety and well-being. There is evidence that young people are safer as a result of the care that they receive at the home.

Assessments for one young person show significantly decreasing episodes of risk-taking behaviour, including sexual exploitation and substance misuse, over the course of their stay at the home. For another young person, a decrease in risks of offending and aggression towards others is apparent. This is evidence of young people's good progress and increased safety.

The quality of risk assessment is good. Risks are clearly identified, and assessments are constantly updated to reflect new information or changes in young people's circumstances. There is clear guidance for staff regarding the action they must take to maintain young people's safety.

The registered manager and staff work proactively with partner agencies to safeguard young people who go missing from the home. There are highly individualised protocols in place, which provide detailed information about the action staff must take if a young person becomes missing. It is evident that staff take appropriate action to safeguard young people who are missing, although some aspects of recording these actions could be improved.

Young people are encouraged to develop safe and appropriate behaviours. There is a strong focus on positive reward. The staff team has a good understanding of young people's emotional responses, and individualised guidance enables staff to support young people in a positive and consistent manner. This good practice results in very few incidents in which staff are required to restrain young people or request police involvement.

Any restraints that do occur are thoroughly recorded and effectively monitored. All those involved in an incident are provided with debrief to enable them to reflect and raise any concerns they have. Records of staff debrief should be clearly linked to the appropriate restraint record to assist in monitoring that these have taken place.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a manager in place who has been registered since June 2018. The registered manager demonstrates strong commitment to improving outcomes for young people. He leads a team of well-motivated staff who have high aspirations for young people and a good understanding of young people's needs.

Feedback from external professionals about the leadership of the home is extremely positive. Several professionals commented on the home's commitment to standing by young people through difficult times. They also reported staff's highly effective communication and partnership working.

The registered manager has a clear sense of the purpose of the home and the aims and objectives of the service provided. He demonstrates the ability to challenge outside agencies where necessary. For example, when recently requested to provide support, which was not in line with the home's statement of purpose, he took appropriate action to address this.

Staff are highly motivated and express pride in the home. They described managers as approachable and always available to provide advice and guidance. Staff described good levels of support from managers and from each other.

All except one staff member hold nationally recognised qualifications in caring for young people. The staff team also benefits from regular training in areas such as safeguarding and behaviour management. Specialist trainers such as health professionals deliver in-house training specific to young people's needs. This comprehensive training helps to

ensure that staff have the skills to provide safe and effective care to young people. The registered manager uses quality assurance systems effectively to ensure that young people's progress and care standards are consistently monitored. The registered manager is aware of the home's strengths and is able to recognise areas for improvement. This means that young people benefit from a constantly improving service.

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: SC035477

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Paul McIntyre

Registered manager: Jonathan Sewell

Inspector

Marie Cordingley: social care inspector

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