

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 children with emotional and or behavioural difficulties.

There is a manager in post who registered with Ofsted in June 2018.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2020	Full	Good
19/11/2018	Full	Good
08/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/06/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There are three children living in the home. All the children said they are happy living there. One child said, 'this is by far the best home I have lived in'.

The children are cared for as individuals and not as a group. Their care plans are task focused to ensure that the care provided is consistent and supports them to make progress in all areas of their lives. Children have good relationships with staff. Staff know the children well. Children are supported to have positive experiences and they progress well.

Children's experiences of arriving at and leaving the home are positive. The children who have left since the last inspection have done so in a planned way. One child returned home to live with his family. Another child has moved on to independence after a very successful transition plan that allowed staff to continue to support him in his new home.

Some children are not currently engaging with education. Staff remain persistent in their attempts to find activities that will help children to move back towards learning. There are clear education plans for children and staff work closely with children's education provisions. This means that children's education is promoted, while their emotional well-being is understood and addressed.

Children's health needs are detailed in their plans. Children are registered with the relevant primary healthcare services. Some children require additional support from local mental health services and staff are proactive in ensuring that they can access a service. Some children make poor choices in relation to their health and staff should ensure that they support children and challenge these negative behaviours. A recommendation has been made to address this matter.

Children are supported to maintain positive relationships with their families. Staff work closely with children and their families to promote positive time together. This helps children to rebuild important family relationships.

Staff help the children to learn the life skills that they will need to live independently. Children practise cooking, budgeting and other life skills. One child has a job and staff have supported with this. One child's family member said, 'they don't treat her as a child they treat her as an apprentice adult'.

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

Children said they feel safe living in the home. They feel they can talk to staff when they are worried as they have good relationships. One child's parent said they are 'not only keeping my child safe, but they are also teaching them to keep themselves safe'.

Some children can display behaviours that present a high level of risk. Good-quality risk assessments provide clear strategies for staff to manage these risks. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of risk and how to manage this effectively. One child has had a significant reduction in incidents of self-harm until recently when these have increased again. There is a very clear risk management plan that balances the risk with the need for the child to progress to independence.

Incidents of children going missing from the home have reduced. Staff respond well to these incidents. Staff follow clear protocols for all children. This includes actively searching for children and encouraging them to return to the home. Consequently, children are safer.

Staff consistently promote positive behaviour. Consequences are proportionate. As a result, staff help children to manage their behaviours in a safer way and children are rarely restrained by staff. On the few occasions when this has happened, the interventions are minimal and proportionate. Records of these interventions are clear and children are encouraged to reflect on and comment on these records. On one occasion, managers did not review an incident of restraint within timescales. A recommendation has been made in relation to this.

Children are protected by the organisation's effective recruitment practices. Staff are background checked and assessed as suitable before any appointment is confirmed. These procedures promote the safety of the children by preventing unsuitable adults from working with them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is forward thinking, using research to inform his practice. He is committed to the children and is well respected by staff. He leads by example and has created a positive ethos in the home. He has high expectations for the children. He is available to the children and this has helped build positive relationships with them. Staff said that they feel well supported and that the manager is approachable.

Children have been able to build positive relationships with staff as the staff team is stable and consistent. When additional staff are needed, these are regular staff which further promotes the consistency of care.

The staff are provided with the essential skills and knowledge for their roles through a comprehensive training package. This informs their practice and ensures that they can meet children's individual and diverse needs.

Impact risk assessments are completed carefully to inform placement decisions around the suitability of new admissions. This ensures that the needs of the children are met safely as children are suitably matched.

The manager has a clear understanding of the children's needs and how staff work to meet these. It is clear the manager monitors practice and this feeds into care

planning for the children. This monitoring and oversight could be recorded more consistently to evidence that learning opportunities are being identified. This has been made a recommendation.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children understand and change negative behaviours in key areas of health, including the use of illegal drugs. This is specifically in relation to cannabis use for one child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)
- The registered person should make best use of information from internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint are reviewed to identify effective practice. This is in relation to a delay in the responsible individual reviewing a record of restraint. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

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: SC035477

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Michael Nunn

Registered manager: Jonathan Sewell

Inspector

Rachael Crook, Social Care Inspector

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