

SC035477

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home is registered to provide care for up to three children who may have emotional and social difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, there were three children living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2018.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 March 2023

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

Date of last inspection: 22 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/03/2022	Full	Good
15/01/2020	Full	Good
19/11/2018	Full	Good
08/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have trusting and positive relationships with staff. They are treated with dignity and respect. Children know how to make complaints. When children have raised concerns, their issues are addressed and responded to. These positive responses ensure that children feel listened to and know that their views are valued.

The manager and staff work with placing authorities and families to promote positive and meaningful family time in line with children's agreed plans. Clear plans are in place to support children when they are away from the home. Children are helped to spend time with their friends. This means that they have age-appropriate social interactions and can build skills and strategies to form and maintain relationships. This helps children to develop their sense of identity.

Children's health and well-being needs are met. They have access to routine and specialist health services as required.

Education is well supported by the team. All children attend education or employment. The team is proactive in ensuring that children's education needs are being met, and staff have clear plans in place to support children who are not yet attending education full time.

Children who are new to the home are always welcomed sensitively and with the best possible planning. There is a robust referral process that is used to assess the needs of children who already live in the home and the impact on children who may be new to the home. This ensures that there is a child-centred approach when making decisions about whether children should live together.

Children who have left the home have left in a positive way, in line with their individual plans. One child was supported and encouraged to develop their emotional well-being alongside independent living skills. This targeted work helped prepare the child for their transition into a semi-independent placement.

The physical environment is warm and welcoming, and it meets the needs of the children. It feels and looks like a family home. However, some areas of the home are in need of redecoration, and some carpets appear worn and in need of replacement.

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

Staff understand the individual risks for each child. Risk and behaviour support plans are detailed. Direct work takes place on relevant topics, such as substance misuse, emotional well-being and healthy relationships. This helps the children to learn how to keep themselves safe. These sessions are proactive but also delivered in response to new risks that arise.

When children go missing from care, there are clear and comprehensive plans in place for staff to follow. The manager and staff work collaboratively with external professionals, such as the local police and missing-from-home team, to ensure well-coordinated responses to support children's safe return.

When it has been necessary to physically hold a child, the measures used have been reasonable and proportionate. Following any incidents, children have the opportunity to express their views. However, there are no records of discussions taking place with staff involved in the incident.

Imposed consequences are not evaluated for their effectiveness. The manager should ensure that all incidents of control and discipline have regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and effective.

Any complaints and allegations are fully investigated. However, information has not always been shared with external agencies in a timely manner. This limits external oversight of safeguarding practices in the home.

Shortfalls in recruitment processes were identified. Gaps in employment history for staff are not always explored. The provider needs to ensure that the recruitment of staff is consistently robust and in line with regulation to ensure that all staff are safe to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager shows an ambitious vision, with high expectations for what all children can achieve. The staff are positive about the manager and describe a supportive environment. Staff who were spoken to describe the manager as readily available to provide advice and guidance.

The manager and staff have positive professional relationships with external professionals and work collaboratively to ensure that children's needs are met. The manager has challenged professionals when necessary to advocate on behalf of the children.

The manager uses internal and external monitoring systems effectively to develop practice in the home. He has a clear vision of the development he wants to achieve. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses, which enables them to take effective action when required.

Staff receive regular supervision; however, this is not always practice-related. Opportunities to support staff to understand how their feelings impact their responses to children's behaviour have been missed. Not all staff have had their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised within the last year.

Team meetings are well attended and occur monthly. They cover topics that are relevant to the current matters arising in the home. They are used as a development opportunity for the team.

The staff team is consistent and provides stability for the children. Children are always cared for by staff who know them well. Staff are suitably qualified and trained in mandatory subjects. However, there are shortfalls in training sessions to meet the children's individual needs, including training in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), the PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy) model of care and substance awareness.

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, 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
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and	20 May 2023

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii) (b)(i)(ii)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that imposed consequences are recorded and reviewed for effectiveness. In addition to this, the registered person must ensure that following a hold, there is a record kept showing that staff have been spoken to about the measure.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff have appropriate training to meet the individual needs of the children, particularly training on ADHD, the PACE model of care and substance awareness.	20 May 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees—	20 May 2023

undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))	
The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))	20 May 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. The notification must include details of the action taken by the home's staff in response to the event. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)
- The registered person should ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive and meets children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. In addition, the registered person should ensure that any damage to the home is quickly repaired and that carpets are maintained to a good condition throughout the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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: Lancashire County Council

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

Responsible individual: Michael Nunn

Registered manager: Jonathan Sewell

Inspector

Katie Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector

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