

SC039673

Lancashire County Council

Monitoring visit

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children. At the time of the inspection, there were six children living in the home.

There is a manager in place who registered with Ofsted in 2019.

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 date: 8 March 2022

This monitoring visit

This children's home was judged inadequate at the full inspection on 26 and 27 January 2022. Following this inspection, three compliance notices were issued in respect of regulation 12, the protection of children standard; regulation 13, the leadership and management standard; and regulation 14, the care planning standard. During this monitoring visit, inspectors monitored compliance with these notices.

Children's risk assessments continue to lack clarity about the risks to children and the strategies for staff to reduce these risks. Managers and staff are failing to assess and manage some known risks for children, which has placed them at risk of serious harm. For example, one child was supported with an interim move to another property. The risk assessment for this transition was poor. Managers and staff did not consider how this move could affect the known risks for this child and did not take steps to mitigate these risks. As a result of this poor risk management, the child was able to enter an unlocked staff bedroom when staff were sleeping and take the

car keys. The child then drove the car, at great risk to themselves and the community.

The group dynamics within the home continue to be a cause for concern. Since the last inspection, children have displayed new behaviours, which have led to disruption in the home and children being harmed. Records of incidents do not demonstrate that staff can effectively manage the children's behaviour. Therefore, inconsistent and ineffective management of children's behaviour is not supporting their welfare or keeping them safe.

Risks for some children are increasing and having a negative impact on other children. One child has made a disclosure that could indicate that they are being criminally exploited. The strategies for staff to support this child are not clear. Furthermore, managers have not assessed how the risks for this child could increase risks for the other children that live in the home.

Training for staff on county lines has been cancelled by the training provider, but has now been rebooked. However, not all staff are booked onto the new date for training. In the absence of formal training in this area, managers have not provided any informal training for staff in order to increase their knowledge and understanding and improve their ability to assess and manage these risks.

Staffing levels in the home have not always been adequate to meet the needs of the children living there, which has left children at risk of harm. Furthermore, staffing levels have not been adjusted in a timely manner following significant events. When staffing levels were increased following one incident, they were only increased during the day, despite the fact that this incident, and most other incidents, occurred during the evening.

Records for one incident evidence that staff had been unable to manage it and children's behaviour had escalated. The two staff members on shift were required to carry out a restraint on one child to prevent them from leaving the home. During the time that staff were involved in this restraint, two of the other children were able to barricade themselves into a bedroom where their behaviour continued to escalate until the early hours of the morning. Staffing levels were not reviewed or adjusted following this incident.

Management monitoring arrangements have not improved sufficiently to ensure that shortfalls in staff practice are being addressed. Children have been at risk of harm due to ongoing poor safeguarding and behaviour management practice. For example, managers had reviewed one record relating to a restraint but had not addressed the shortfalls in staff practice. This poor oversight does not ensure that the restraint practices used are necessary and proportionate and only used as a last resort to keep children safe.

No children have moved in to the home since the last inspection. One child who had moved in to the home shortly before the last inspection has been significantly affected by the group dynamics within the home and the risks associated with the other children. This child has increased self-harming behaviours and is struggling with the significant disruption in the home caused by the behaviours of other children.

A theoretical exercise had been planned by the responsible individual of the home. This was to support managers to develop their skills in assessing placement requests for children. This planned exercise would have provided some insight into how managers had reflected and improved on recent failings in this area. However, this exercise has not been completed.

Two children have left the home since the last inspection. For one child, this was not a positive or well-planned transition. There was a significant incident for this child, which was the result of poor risk management by managers and staff. Following this incident, the child was moved to an unregistered provision and was not able to say goodbye to the staff or children living in the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/01/2022	Full	Inadequate
07/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
11/12/2018	Full	Outstanding
11/12/2017	Full	Outstanding

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi))	24 April 2022
*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—	24 April 2022

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(d)(f)(h))	
*The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i))	24 April 2022

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC039673

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

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

Responsible individual: Gwyneth Monk

Registered manager: James Smith

Inspectors

Emma Thornton, Social Care Inspector
Julia Toller, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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