

SC039673

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

A manager has been appointed but has not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 14 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/06/2023	Full	Good
15/06/2022	Full	Good
25/01/2022	Full	Inadequate
07/01/2020	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from well-planned moves into the home and out of the home. One child has returned home to their family and another child has moved out to semi-independence.

Staff work with children's families to support family time. A parent said, 'They have looked after [child's name] really well, they have done everything I have asked and supported and helped me seeing her.' Staff are supporting two children to spend a significant amount of time with their families. This helps children to maintain and rebuild important relationships, which support their sense of self and identity.

Not all the children attend mainstream school. However, all children are receiving alternative education during school hours. Staff are creative in finding educational opportunities that fit children's needs.

Staff ensure that children have a variety of fun activities to do outside of school hours. Staff and children take part in organised football games with staff. Staff also take children to the gym. Children talked about trips they have planned for later in the year. One child was thrilled as staff had taken him to see his favourite football team. Children have fun and build happy memories.

There have been some challenges with behaviour management. On the whole staff manage behaviour well. The stable, experienced staff team ensures that children have clear boundaries and are offered incentives for behaving well. This contributes to helping children to learn to make good choices for themselves as they grow up.

This is a purpose-built children's home, and some elements of its design have an institutional impression. The bathrooms have poor ventilation which means that they frequently require treatment for mould caused by condensation. Some of the internal doors that lead to communal areas have locks. This may prevent children from having access to all areas of their home.

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

There are some worries about children going missing from home. When children are missing, they are at risk of significant harm. The manager and staff work closely with relevant partner agencies. They use their combined knowledge of children to help bring them home safely. Clear safety plans are in place and the incidents of missing from home have reduced.

Staff have all had relevant training to help them understand children's specific risks. Staff are very clear about what action they need to take when there are safeguarding concerns. This means that staff know how to keep children safe.

Children have been at risk of criminal exploitation. The manager has ensured that staff have been trained in how to recognise signs of exploitation so that they have the skills to recognise it. Staff have worked in close partnership with the relevant agencies such as police and the complex safeguarding team to help build safety plans to keep children safe.

There have been some new staff recruited to work in the home. There are thorough safer recruitment checks to ensure that staff who care for children are safe and appropriate to do so.

Children know how to make complaints. A child has made a complaint to the manager. This was taken very seriously and investigated thoroughly. This means that children feel listened to, their worries are heard and treated with sincerity.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

A new manager has been in post since December 2023 but is not yet registered with Ofsted. The application was sent to Ofsted and was returned to the manager as some important details were missing. It has not yet been re-submitted. This is outside of the acceptable timeframe. Registration is a requirement for this role.

Staff are offered regular supervision, where they have good opportunity to discuss the children in their care. When casual staff work in the home, they are also offered supportive meetings with managers to help them reflect on their work. This benefits the children, as staff can reflect on how they are caring for them.

Staff are all qualified or are training for the relevant qualification. Staff are offered other training alongside this to help them to tailor their care to the children's specific needs.

Staff meet as a team monthly. They also meet regularly with external therapeutic professionals who have insights into the children's psychological wellbeing. They offer support to help make sure staff can meet children's emotional needs.

The home has a stable staff team who have worked together for a long time and communicate well with each other. Staff say that they 'love' their job. The happy motivated staff team provide good consistent care to the children who live in the home.

Staff take the time to understand children's backgrounds, different cultures, and religious needs. Children's specific diets are catered to. Children's rights are understood and respected.

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 provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership; does not satisfy regulation 28; or is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) and (2)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the person appointed to manage the home re-submits their application to become registered.	21 June 2024
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—	21 June 2024

is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate;

is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe.

(Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that internal locks on the doors in the communal areas in the home are removed.

Recommendation

- The responsible person should ensure that the home remains up to date and homely particularly the bathrooms which are dated and attract mould due to poor ventilation. (The Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards. Paragraph 3.9 page 15)

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: SC039673

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

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

Responsible individual: Gwyneth Monk

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Cathy Wilkins, Social Care Inspector
Paulette Forbes, Social Care Inspector

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