

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. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children. At the time of the inspection there were 6 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 dates: 25 to 26 January 2022

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children are poor, and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 7 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
11/12/2018	Full	Outstanding
11/12/2017	Full	Outstanding
10/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children's progress and experiences have been variable. Some children have had positive experiences and are making progress in education. For other children, poor risk management is having a negative effect on their safety and welfare and limiting their progress.

Children report that they get along well with one another. However, relationships between children have not always been positive. Children have taken responsibility for providing support to other children who are having a difficult time. Expectations have been placed on one child to support staff in managing other children's behaviour. This places inappropriate roles and expectations on children that affects their emotional well-being.

Furthermore, children are not being given support to develop positive relationships with one another. Staff are unable to manage the complex dynamics within the home. Therefore, staff are not preventing children from harming one another or effectively managing the impact of children's risks and behaviours on other children living in the home.

One child moved into the home during a period when risks for other children were increasing. Ineffective decision making meant that the child has been adversely affected by the dynamics in the home and the risks associated with other children.

One child has had a positive experience when moving into supported accommodation. This child was supported to develop their independence skills and staff from the home continue to offer support, which is helping them to manage this transition.

Children's health needs are understood, and children are supported to attend routine appointments. Appropriate referrals have been made to ensure that specialist help is made available for children who need it.

Children said that they can talk to staff and that they know how to complain. However, one child did not receive adequate support when they made a disclosure to staff. The parent of this child also made a complaint about a related issue. The manager did not respond to this complaint and therefore failed to address the concerns that were raised.

Children have opportunities to attend hobbies and sports clubs. There are photographs displayed around the home of children engaging in positive activities and staff are making memory books that children can take with them when they leave.

Some areas of the home are decorated to a good standard. Staff celebrate children's artwork, and this is displayed in the home. However, children's bathrooms and the

communal landing are not maintained to an acceptable standard which does not constitute a homely and welcoming environment for children.

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

Safeguarding practice in this home does not promote the welfare of the children sufficiently. Staff do not always respond effectively to concerns about children's safety.

Children have been at risk because staff have not taken effective action when they are missing. Staff try to find children when they are missing, however, staff responses are inconsistent. Staff have not reported children missing to the police within appropriate timescales and have not acted in accordance with children's individual plans. Significant delays in reporting children missing to the police, does not demonstrate effective or robust safeguarding practice. Furthermore, management oversight of incidents had not identified these shortfalls and inadequate safeguarding practice continued.

Managers and staff have failed to recognise and respond to all risks for children. Staff have not been trained in safeguarding matters, such as county lines, which means that they do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to keep children safe.

Staff have not responded appropriately when children have expressed intentions to harm themselves. Staff failed to implement a safety plan or monitor a child's welfare following a significant incident. One child who had expressed suicidal intentions was able to leave the home again the following day and staff did not know their whereabouts or make attempts to contact them.

Children's risk assessments do not clearly identify all known risks for children. Risk assessments are not routinely updated, and some risk assessments contain conflicting information. Risk assessments do not clearly set out what actions staff should take to address risks for children. Some risks have been incorrectly classified as low risk, which does not support staff's understanding of how to keep children safe. Children have been at risk due to the inconsistent and ineffective actions taken by staff.

Children do not always benefit from clear and consistent boundaries or effective behaviour management strategies. Sanctions for children are not restorative in nature and some sanctions have been repeated despite them having no impact on behaviour. Manager's oversight of these records has been poor. Staff continued to use ineffective behaviour management strategies, which does not support children to reflect upon and improve their behaviour.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There is a suitably qualified manager in post who registered with Ofsted in 2019. Staff find the manager to be approachable and supportive.

The manager has failed to meet the requirements and recommendations, in relation to risk assessments, that were made during the monitoring visit in July 2020. Management oversight of children's risk assessments and incidents has failed to identify shortfalls in safeguarding practice. Therefore, ineffective safeguarding practice has continued, which has placed children at risk of harm.

On some occasions children have been cared for by an insufficient number of staff, which has placed children at risk of harm. For example, a significant event took place, however staffing levels were not adjusted. This meant that when further incidents occurred, the staffing levels were not sufficient to allow for risks to be managed.

Not all staff have received regular supervision which means that opportunities for the manager to develop staff practice have been missed. Regular team meetings have taken place, however, issues raised have not been followed up. For example, the lack of rewards for children was raised in a team meeting by the manager. Despite this, some children have not had any rewards since they moved into the home. This does not demonstrate that staff are consistently promoting positive behaviour.

When children had been restrained documentation is not consistently completed. Records of restraints are unclear and fail to provide an accurate account of what has occurred. This means that the manager has not evaluated the appropriateness or effectiveness of the measures used, which does not promote children's safety and welfare.

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))	6 March 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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;	6 March 2022

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))	6 March 2022
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;	26 March 2022

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

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)(3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children. They will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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

Responsible individual: Gwyneth Monk

Registered manager: James Smith

Inspector

Emma Thornton, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2022