

SC039676

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides short-break provision for children who have severe learning disabilities and associated complex needs. The service provides overnight short-break care for up to six children at a time.

The home is operated by Lancashire County Council. The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2004 and has a level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare. The registered person has not worked in the home since December 2021. A new manager has been appointed on a temporary arrangement and intends to submit an application to Ofsted to become registered.

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: 15 and 16 March 2022

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

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

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

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

Date of last inspection: 18 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
29/01/2019	Full	Outstanding
08/11/2017	Full	Outstanding
28/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The service currently supports 16 children. Before accessing the service, children and people who are important to them can visit the home to help them to decide about whether to take up the support offered. Managers visit children and families at their home to gather information about the child. This ensures that children receive individual care that incorporates the routine the child has at home. During the inspection, three children were enjoying their short break.

Children are supported by managers and staff to access adult short-break services when the child turns 18. Staff arrange celebrations for children who are leaving the service. Children receive a memory book created by staff of their time at the setting. As a result, children have positive experiences of leaving the short-break service.

Children enjoy positive relationships with managers and staff who know them well. Staff's interactions with children are exceptional. Staff prepare activities they know the children like. They promote children's wishes by allowing children to explore the environment and choose activities they want to participate in. Children have fun and really enjoy their short breaks.

Good use of Picture Exchange Communication System and Makaton means that children who cannot communicate verbally can make their needs and wishes known to staff. Managers are developing communication systems to help children to give feedback about the care they receive. Staff respond appropriately and are able to use different communication tools to ensure that children understand daily routines and boundaries.

Parents speak positively about the care that children receive. They feel that staff communicate well and feel involved in plans for their child. One parent wrote to the inspector explaining that their son is very happy and likes to see all the staff. The parent compares their child's visits to a sleepover with friends. This provides children with opportunities that may not be possible at home.

Staff ensure that the children receive support to develop their independence skills in line with their age and development. For example, one child has progressed from percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) feeds to a liquidised diet. This practice helps children to achieve milestones in their development and promotes their confidence and self-esteem as they feel a sense of achievement.

On two occasions, the manager or child's key worker has not been able to attend children's review meetings. Despite the manager having access to the child's records, they have not reviewed the actions agreed. As a result, the number of agreed days for children who access the service has been incorrectly recorded and not challenged.

Managers do not always access children's education, health and care plans available on the electronic record system. This is a missed opportunity to support staff to understand the assessed needs of children and strategies that are consistent with those used at home and school.

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

Managers and staff have a good understanding of children's behaviours. They can recognise early warning signs of children becoming anxious or distressed. This helps staff to redirect behaviours and prevents potentially challenging situations from escalating. Positive behaviours are consistently encouraged by staff. This good practice reduces the number of incidents and helps to keep children safe.

Medication is managed well. Staff are trained in administering medication safely. They ensure that medication is stored securely, and children are administered medication in line with the prescriber's directions.

Children do not go missing and there have been no incidents of bullying. Staff support children to enjoy activities that promote their independence and provide opportunities for them to develop skills in keeping themselves safe.

Staff support children to use electronic devices. Children are supervised when accessing the internet. This reduces the risk of online exploitation and abuse.

Managers and staff identify potential risks. Measures are put in place to reduce risk. However, children's plans do not clearly record decisions that can restrict a child's movement. For example, some children sleep in safe space beds; however, there is no assessment in place to support why children need these.

On the rare occasions that physical intervention has been used by staff, it has been done so to prevent harm to the child. However, records do not contain a clear description of the hold used and a clear record of debriefs with children and staff. This is a missed opportunity to learn from practice.

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

The managers do not ensure that the physical environment is kept to a high standard. For example, a large piece of card is used to block sunlight from a window so that children can watch television programmes. Projectors in the sensory room are not working, meaning that children cannot get the full benefit of the sensory area. Staff do not always take action to improve the environment for children. One child was seen sitting on a torn chair while being supported by staff to have a drink. This affects children's experiences.

Managers do not ensure that staff receive regular supervision and yearly appraisals. This limits opportunities for staff to reflect and learn from practice.

Children are cared for by a consistent and experienced staff team. However, managers do not ensure that all staff receive training to meet the individual needs of children who access the short-break service. For example, some staff have not completed training in autism spectrum disorder and global developmental delay. This has the potential for children's needs to be misunderstood.

Managers seek feedback about the service. This helps them to understand what the service does well. Monitoring systems are not effective in identifying areas that need to be developed. As a result, there has been a decline in the quality of care provided to children.

Managers and staff work well with parents. This helps children to settle and enjoy their stay.

Staff feel supported by managers who are approachable. They value visits from the responsible individual, who visits regularly. Team meetings provide a safe space for staff to discuss children and topics to support the day-to-day arrangements of the service. Managers and staff have a clear vision for the service; this includes relocating the service to a new purpose-built facility.

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

Recommendations

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children. use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that the home is maintained and furnished to a good standard and that specialist equipment is kept in good working order.	28 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— 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.	28 April 2022

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) In particular, the manager should ensure that staff receive training specific to the needs of children who use the service.	
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that monitoring systems are used to review the quality of care children receive and support the development of the service.	28 April 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— 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))	28 April 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— a description of the measure and its duration. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv))	28 April 2022

In particular, the registered manager must ensure that the description of restraint techniques is sufficiently detailed to provide a clear explanation to the reader of the record.	
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Recommendation

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

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: SC039676

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: Michael Nunn

Registered manager: Susan Sewell

Inspector

Helen Malanaphy, Social Care Inspector

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