

SC039676

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a short-break children's home operated by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to six young people who may have physical and/or learning disabilities.

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She was registered to manage the home in 2007.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 January 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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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 highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 8 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/11/2017	Full	Outstanding
28/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/12/2016	Full	Outstanding
03/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must ensure that all employees 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) (b)(c))	31/03/2019
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. The system referred to in paragraph (1) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(2) (b)(c)(5))	30/04/2019
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 - details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use 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. (Regulation 35 (3)(ii)(v)(b)(i)(ii))	30/06/2019

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, that repairs are made to damaged plaster work and areas of the

home are decorated in order to refresh scuffed and tired-looking paintwork.

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

In particular, that goals for young people are recorded in a manner that is specific and measurable and that these are reviewed. In addition, that there is evidence that these are developed and shared with parents.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people receive high levels of care and attention from a dedicated team of staff. The consistent and nurturing care is underpinned by staff understanding the young people extremely well. Their knowledge of young people has been built up over a number of years; for young people who are non-verbal in their communication, this knowledge and understanding is invaluable and ensures that they receive highly sensitive care.

Young people benefit from the dedication that staff bring to their role and, as a result, they make incremental progress. Examples include being able to tolerate their peers, eating with others at a table, increasing their verbal communication and widening the choices they make.

Staff are attuned and sensitive to young people's non-verbal means of communication and how they may be feeling. The young people visiting this home were repeatedly described by parents and professionals as being 'happy'.

When staff and managers plan the short breaks, a great deal of thought and attention is paid to matching young people's needs and abilities. For example, during some young people's visits, the number of young people admitted is reduced and staffing is increased. This ensures that young people fully benefit from their visits.

Young people are offered a wide range of opportunities to maximise their community-based experiences. These include days out to beaches, theme parks, theatre trips and sea-life centres. Young people are given every opportunity to enjoy themselves and have fun. Staff work extremely hard to ensure that young people's additional and complex needs do not become barriers to enjoying life-enhancing experiences. One parent commented: 'They have found his buttons of what makes him happy.'

One social worker, commenting on the care offered to two young people, said: 'They [young people] are calmer and happier and this is down to the support from staff. They are socially included and their needs are met. The opportunities that they have is down to the dedication that the staff bring.'

Young people's families appreciate and value this service. Parents describe the staff and managers as being very flexible in their approach and in working with them in timing the breaks to best meet the needs of the young people and the family as a whole.

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

Parents and professionals feel that young people are safe when in the care of the staff. Staff are vigilant, and their knowledge of young people informs their responses to any changes in young people's behaviours. For example, if young people arrive presenting as unsettled in their behaviour, staff provide reassurance, distraction and a calming environment.

Transition planning is thoughtful and child-centred, and there is close collaboration between staff, families and future care providers. This provides good transition programmes for young people joining and leaving the home and minimises any disruption or feelings of insecurity that may be experienced.

Since the last inspection, there have not been any complaints or safeguarding concerns. New members of staff have been recruited in a manner that ensures that young people are not exposed to adults who may present a risk to their welfare and safety.

Since the last inspection, there have been only three physical restraints. This is testament to the effective strategies that staff employ to keep young people calm and to pre-empt any frustrations they may express. However, recordings by staff are not comprehensive in detailing the factors that led to the restraint or the techniques that staff employed to de-escalate the incident.

The manager performs regular audits of all young people's medication files to ensure that there is safe and accurate practice. There are closely adhered-to procedures for receiving medication into the premises, and any changes in medication have to be authorised by a medical professional.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She was registered to manage the home in 2007. She leads and manages a highly experienced staff team, and staff turnover is very low. This brings considerable benefits to young people regarding stability of care.

The manager offers good support to staff that is both formal and informal. She operates an 'open-door' policy and is available for staff to discuss queries and concerns outside of office hours.

Staff receive a wide variety of training, and there is suitable monitoring to ensure that training remains up-to-date and that the skills of staff reflect the needs of young people.

There are positive and well-established relationships with professionals and young people's families. All spoke highly of the manager and the staff team.

Since the last inspection, one recommendation has been met; impact assessments are now thoroughly completed for each young person. The second recommendation could not be evaluated due to the manner in which staff supervision is recorded. These records were considered to be confidential due to possible sensitive personal information being integrated into the professional records. The manager recognised the difficulties with the current means of recording and proposed necessary changes to facilitate suitable future scrutiny.

The manager has good insight into the areas for development. However, formal systems to gather feedback from families, young people and staff are not established and do not currently inform the plan for the home moving forward.

The staff and managers have recently recognised that the means of recording and measuring young people's goals are not sufficiently focused. New formats are currently being developed, but are yet to be implemented.

The home offers large open areas, both inside and outside, for young people to enjoy. These are complemented with soft play areas, sensory rooms and a range of sleeping arrangements to ensure that young people are safe and comfortable. However, the decor is looking worn, and some areas are in need of repair.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: Paul McIntyre

Registered manager: Susan Sewell

Inspector

Pauline Yates, social care inspector

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