

SC039689

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated and managed by a local authority and is registered to provide care for up to six children with social and emotional difficulties. There are five children currently living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2019.

Inspection date: 6 February 2024

Date of last inspection: 26 September 2023

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

One child has moved into the home since the last inspection, and this was a positive experience. The manager completed an assessment of the child's needs alongside the other children already living in the home. However, managers did not identify clear strategies to mitigate known risks or appropriate services that the child could access when they have moved in.

Most children have positive relationships with staff and can identify trusted adults. One child's relationship with staff has suffered due to the impact of the frequency of behavioural incidents of another child who no longer lives in the home. Staff rebuild their relationships with children and provide a nurturing environment. Staff take children on activities outside of the home. As a result, children enjoy positive experiences and make memories.

The home is generally a warm, welcoming environment for children. Children's bedrooms are personalised to their preferences. Staff redecorate areas of the home when damage is caused by children, and one upstairs bathroom suite needs replacing as damage is beyond repair. Some internal doors have key locks. Although the manager gave a reason for the decision to lock doors, this practice restricts children's access to all areas of the home.

Most children attend education provisions and make progress. For one child, there are external factors, including an age assessment due to their legal status, which limits their ability to obtain an appropriate provision. Staff have implemented activities for the child in the interim period. The activities include boxing, attending the gym and developing the child's proficiency in the English language.

Staff promote healthy lifestyles and children have no unmet health needs. Staff support children to attend appointments and seek medical help. Staff understand the specialist health needs of children and ensure that there is relevant medical provision.

Staff understand children's risks, including those relating to online safety. Staff have systems in place to reduce potential risks to children when accessing the internet. Children's devices are monitored, and staff are aware of content being accessed by children. When concerns arise, staff respond quickly and source external support from relevant professionals to reduce the risk.

Staff follow children's individual plans when children are missing from the home. Staff search known addresses and the local area to try and locate children and return them safely. Staff record relevant details about episodes of going missing and report children missing from the home to relevant professionals. Children are offered

an independent person to speak with on their return home to try and understand why children go missing. However, children do not always engage with this. Managers do not consistently record their evaluation of missing incidents to demonstrate any further learning or potential shortfalls in staff practice.

The manager completes a location assessment and considers the potential risks to the children within the community. This includes a consultation with relevant professionals. Staff have clear guidance to follow and know how to access additional support if required.

Staff training and development is a priority. Any gaps in staff training are identified and discussed in supervision sessions. Staff attend relevant training courses specifically to meet the individual needs of children living in the home. Staff said they can meet the needs of the children and staff morale is high.

Staff supervision takes place regularly and is reflective. Staff said they receive support from the manager and are valued. Staff have opportunities to reflect on their care of the children and to discuss any areas of development. Records of supervision have improved and now include the correct name of each staff member.

The managers and leaders are using the findings from external monitoring to improve the service. However, progress in some areas is slow.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/10/2022	Full	Good
29/03/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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, The 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 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 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)(f)(h)) In particular, this relates to ensuring that there is sufficient management oversight of incidents and that debriefs are offered to all involved staff.	6 March 2024
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; 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— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;	6 March 2024

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 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iv)) This relates to locking the kitchen.	
--	--

Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans, and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. Actions to mitigate risks should be clearly outlined and recorded. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should ensure that the design of the home includes any necessary adaptations to meet the needs of the children, including providing clean and safe bathroom facilities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.24)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC039689

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: Warren Howarth

Inspector

Leanne Carr, 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 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 reports.ofsted.gov.uk.

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

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2024