

SC039689

Lancashire County Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is one of a number operated by the local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children. There is currently no registered manager for this service.

Inspection date: 11 September 2018

This monitoring visit

The home was judged as requires improvement to be good at the full inspection on 24 April 2018.

Following notifications from the provider about incidents that have occurred in the home, concerns were identified that requirements raised at the full inspection had not been addressed. A monitoring visit was carried out to assess the home's progress in meeting the requirements.

There has been no registered manager at the home for over 26 weeks. The acting manager has made an application to Ofsted to be registered.

At the home's last inspection, it was found that risk assessments did not always contain current information about the risks apparent to individual young people. Risk management plans lacked clear strategies, which meant that staff did not have sufficient guidance about how to maintain young people's safety and well-being. A requirement was raised to address this shortfall.

At this monitoring visit it was found that this requirement had not been met. Some young people's risk assessments still do not fully address identified areas of concern. In addition, young people's risk assessments are not consistently reviewed or updated following the availability of new information, or changes to young people's circumstances that may require a change in risk management.

Risk management guidance for staff is unclear and, in some cases, lacks important information. For example, agreement has been reached with external agencies to

prevent a young person from visiting an area where significant risks have been identified. This information is not included in her risk assessment and, because of this shortfall, staff have not followed the agreement. This has led to the young person visiting the area and experiencing a negative and unsafe situation.

Some young people engage in high-risk behaviours, such as going missing from home. At times, this can lead to them being at risk of significant harm. However, when young people return home, there is little evaluation of missing from home incidents or learning identified from return home interviews with young people. For example, a young person recently provided concerning information about who she had been with when missing, but this information was not used to inform future risk management.

There is evidence that communication with external agencies is not always used effectively to safeguard young people. For example, a piece of significant information recorded by a specialist worker following an interview with a young person had not been seen by the manager until inspectors pointed it out. Another example was that of a young person who disclosed that she had been assaulted while away from home. Although the manager contacted the police about this disclosure, safeguarding procedures were not followed, in that the home did not alert the local authority about the need for a strategy meeting.

Not all aspects of young people's presenting needs are addressed within their daily care plans. For example, an external professional recently expressed concerns about one young person's emotional health and requested that he should be monitored by staff. However, there is no reference to the young person's emotional well-being or the request to monitor him in his daily care plan.

A young person who was recently admitted to the home has some health concerns. Plans had previously been in place for him to visit his GP, but this did not happen due to his move to the home. However, staff have not identified the need to make new arrangements for the young person to see a GP. It was also identified that information relating to a penicillin allergy had not been included in the young person's daily care plan or medication administration records, despite this information being identified in his personal details.

Some young people who live at the home have recently had some difficult experiences. For example, one young person has experienced a great deal of disruption in recent weeks and faces uncertainty about his future care planning. There appears to be a lack of insight by staff in terms of how this may be impacting on his emotional well-being and his care plan does not address the need to provide him with emotional support. Meaningful direct work, which would have provided him with the opportunity to express his thoughts and feelings, has been limited and not of particularly good quality.

The young person recently stayed in an alternative placement for a period of almost six weeks. During this time, the home was not meeting all his day-to-day needs or providing him with security or stability. The young person has now returned to the

home, but is refusing to engage in his new educational placement as he believes he will be moved again soon.

At the last inspection of the home, a requirement was made in relation to developing positive relationships with young people through effective communication and an understanding of their behaviours. It was found during this inspection that this requirement was not met.

There are shortfalls in both the frequency and quality of direct work carried out with young people. Records indicate that staff do not consistently address matters that are significant for the young person or encourage young people to express their views, thoughts and wishes.

An external professional shared the view that the staff team lacked insight into the emotional and behavioural needs of the young person she worked with. The professional felt that there was a strong emphasis on consequence and reward, which did not always take the young person's complex emotional needs into account.

It was identified that staff responses to young people's behaviours are not consistent or in line with young people's individual behaviour support plans. Inspectors were made aware of an incident that had recently taken place, during which a young person made some demands and threatened to escalate his behaviours unless these demands were met. The young person's demands were met, prompting concern from another young person about this being unfair. This inconsistent approach leads to unclear expectations and boundaries and does not assist young people in developing safe behaviours in the long term.

Some shortfalls were noted in recording processes in the home. Records of young people's missing from home incidents sometimes lack important information, which would assist in future risk assessment. In some cases, there were no records of incidents that had occurred at the home. For example, one incident involved the heightened behaviour of a young person which led to a staff response that was not in line with the young person's behaviour support plan.

During the inspection, it was identified that several significant incidents had taken place at the home, which Ofsted had not been notified of. These included allegations that were made by young people. A failure to inform Ofsted of significant events undermines the regulator's ability to monitor intelligence about services and, as such, does not promote young people's well-being.

As a result of this monitoring visit, two compliance notices have been served on the provider to secure improvements at the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/04/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/08/2017	Full	Good
01/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/06/2016	Full	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, 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 positive relationships standard The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present	12/10/2018

emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(i-ix))	
*The protection of children standard 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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies; that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vi)(vii)(b))	12/10/2018
The leadership and management standard 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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a))	26/10/2018

The care planning standard The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. (Regulation 14(1)(a))	26/10/2018
Behaviour management policies and records The behaviour management policies and records regulation The registered person must prepare and implement a policy (“the behaviour management policy”) which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children’s home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, or discipline in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and 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, 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)(2)(3)(a)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	26/10/2018
Notification of a serious event The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the	26/10/2018

outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, page 14.4)
- Staff skills for safeguarding should include being able to identify signs that children may be at risk, and support children in strategies to manage and reduce any risks. Staff should encourage children to express their views about whether they feel safe both in and outside the home. Staff should support children to understand how to ask for help to stay safe and that the home is an environment which supports this. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.10)
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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, County Hall, Fishergate, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Paul McIntyre

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Gwyneth Monk

Inspectors

Marie Cordingley, social care inspector

Mrs Forshaw, social care inspector

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