

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC039689
Inspector	Sarah Oldham
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Lancashire County Council
Registered person address	PO Box 78 County Hall Fishergate Preston PR1 8XJ
Responsible individual	Brendan Francis Lee
Registered manager	Jane Margaret Tandy / Anthony William Moorcroft
Date of last inspection	14/02/2014

Inspection date	14/01/2015
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	NIL

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
-------------------	-----------------

Full report

Information about this children's home

This service is a local authority children's home. The home provides care and accommodation for six young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/02/2014	Interim	good progress
01/11/2013	Full	good
07/01/2013	Interim	good progress
31/05/2012	Full	good

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there (Regulation 11 (1)(a))	29/01/2015
18 (2001)	ensure the children make use of educational facilities appropriate to their age, aptitude, need, interests and potential and the routine of the home is organised so as to further children's participation in education, including regular attendance at school (Regulation 18 (1)(a)(b))	23/03/2015
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are kept clean and reasonably decorated	23/03/2015

	and maintained (Regulation 31 (2)€)	
28 (2001)	ensure that information, documents and records as specified in Schedule 3 relating to the child is kept up to date and is signed and dated by the author of each written entry. This is specifically in relation to records maintained in the missing from home book, (Regulation 28 (1)(a)(b)©)	23/03/2015
17B (2001)	ensure within 24 hours use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include confirmation about the measur (Regulation 17 B (3)(h)(i))	23/03/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure written records kept by the home when a child goes missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reason given for the child running away from the home, any action taken in light of those reasons. (NMS 5.10)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people experience different outcomes during their placement at the home; with some developing improved emotional resilience and others making adequate progress from their initial starting point. Staff work consistently with all young people to help them understand about their past life experiences and support them to develop skills to aid them with their future development.

Young people are supported with their individual health care needs. They are registered with health care professionals and are supported to attend health care appointments to maintain physical health care. Additional resources are sourced where there is an identified need; for example, support from children and adolescent mental health teams to support the young people's psychological and mental health care needs. However, some young people have refused to engage with specific health care service. Staff continue to be proactive in encouraging and supporting them to do so. Medication is stored, administered and recorded in accordance with agreed protocols to promote the health of young people in a safe and effective way.

Young people are supported to attend education. However, not all young people are attending school, college or educational placements on a consistent and regular basis which therefore impacts on their overall educational achievements. Staff continue to work closely with education partners and also encourage young people to undertake educational work when they do not attend school. This enables those young people to complete some educational work to enable them to prepare for school and college placement.

Contact arrangements are clearly identified and supported. This enables young people to maintain contact with family and friends and this provides them with insight into their own history and identity. Where there are any restrictions on contact these are also known and adhered to.

The placements of some young people at the home has been made on an emergency basis. Although the placements were made in the best interest of those young people, this impacted on the other young people and therefore more appropriate placements have been sought.

Young people engage in a number of activities both within the home, the local community and further afield. They discuss with staff their interests and wishes during individual key worker sessions and within young people's meetings to enable them to be involved in the planning of these.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with their families and other important people to them, to enable them to have a good understanding of their

background. Where it is not in the best interest of the young person, this is clearly explained and discussed with them.

Quality of care

adequate

Young people spoken with say that they generally have good relationships with the staff and this is also commented on by social workers who feel this is a strength of the home. One young person said 'the staff here are good and I can talk with them about any worries or concerns I have.' Another young person said 'the staff here are better than at my previous placement and have helped me settle in here.'

Staff discuss young people's placement plans with them to ensure they are fully involved with plans for their care. These plans are also shared with placing social workers and link directly with the initial identified needs of the young people. The home's placement plans outline all areas of care and support required, including support with education and health care needs. Not all young people, prior to moving into the home, have engaged with education. To address this, staff work closely with the virtual head teacher and education providers to support the educational attendance and outcomes for young people. Although education attendance has increased, some young people do not attend education on a consistent basis and this impacts on their overall educational attainment and life chances.

Young people are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles by contributing to the planning, shopping and preparation of meals. This means that young people, who previously had poor diets, are eating healthier. Young people also learn skills for their future independence and this has resulted in young people who have moved on from the home to live independently with the necessary understanding and skills to do so.

The home is located near to the town centre and has access to a range of facilities, including health care provisions, schools, shops, leisure centres and good transport links. The home is maintained to a good standard on the ground floor. However, upstairs in the main corridor and one bedroom, which is currently not in use, significant damage has been caused. Requests for maintenance and redecoration have been made, but a date for this work to be undertaken has yet to be confirmed. This impacts on the overall décor of the home. Young people have their own bedrooms which they are supported to personalise and reflect their individual tastes and interests.

Keeping children and young people safe

adequate

All young people have individual risk assessments in place identifying potential risks and the level of support required to minimise these risks. However, some previous risk assessments contain greater detail than others.

There have been some incidents which have placed young people at risk. An example of this has been an incident of fire setting at the home. Following this, all individual risk and fire assessments have been reviewed with clear strategies in place on how to manage and continue to monitor identified risks to safeguard young people.

There has been some incidents of bullying. Staff have worked with young people to support them to understand that bullying, in any form, is not acceptable. This is discussed with young people on an individual basis and also within young people's meetings. Staff remain vigilant to any signs or symptoms of bullying behaviours to ensure this risk is minimised. Young people know how to complain and say that they feel able to share any concerns they have with the staff or the manager. They also have access to independent visitors for further support. One young person said 'I know if I was unhappy about something, I can always talk to the staff or manager and they would do something about it.'

All young people have behaviour management strategies in place to encourage and support them with their behaviours. This includes the use of rewards and sanctions. Sanctions have decreased following a full review of the sanction process. When sanctions are made, the effectiveness of them is reviewed. Sanctions are recorded and young people are offered the opportunity to record their views about them. Young people said they felt the sanctions made were fair. All staff have received training in behaviour management including the use of de-escalation techniques. Physical interventions are only used as a last resort and to promote the safety of the young person or others. However, some records have not been completed in full within the bound book although are recorded on the computer system. This does not promote the consistent monitoring of these records.

Recent admissions to the home have resulted in additional challenges to boundaries and increased areas of risk, including self-harm. To minimise risks and to increase support levels to the young people, there has been an increase in staffing levels. This includes waking night staff and additional staffing during the day. Agreements in place also restrict additional admissions to the home. However, recent emergency admissions made for a short period of time impacted on the stability of the young people already in placement. Alternative arrangements have been put in place to ensure future admissions to the home do not further impact on the young people living at the home.

There has been an increase of missing from home incidents. Records of incidents of missing from home have not been consistently updated to reflect the action taken by staff and signed by staff. This does not ensure that the home is following agreed protocols to minimise the risk of young people missing from care. In addition, there has been an increase in police being called to the home. The Registered Manager has

arranged for further training with the police for all staff to ensure that staff in the home are working in partnership to promote the safety of young people at all times.

Staff employed at the home are subject to the Local Authority's vetting procedures. Staff do not start work in the home until all appropriate checks are complete, thereby ensuring that only suitably checked adults have contact with young people. All fire, gas and electrical equipment is serviced regularly. This helps to ensure they are in good working order.

Leadership and management

adequate

The Registered Manager has been in post since February 2011 and was previously the Registered Manager of another children's home. She is suitably qualified, holding NVQ level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People and level 4 in Residential Childcare Management. She is supported within her role by two deputy managers who are also suitably qualified and experienced. The home has undergone a number of recent admissions to the home which has impacted on the overall outcomes for young people. However, the management and staff have worked with the young people, their placing social workers and other professionals to promote the stability of placements and achieve some good outcomes for some young people.

The home benefits from a core staff team who have been in post for some time and have appropriate qualifications and experience to support young people. Additional staffing has been used to support the complex needs of the young people. To promote continuity of support, the home has used established agency staff who the young people know and are developing good relationships with.

Staff receive regular support through supervision, team meetings and training. Staff also receive annual appraisals and the views of young people contribute to these. All mandatory training is completed by staff and additional training is sourced to enable staff to develop their skills in supporting young people with complex and challenging behaviours.

External monitoring of the home is undertaken on a monthly basis and this provides the management and staff with an overview of the home and any shortfalls that require to be addressed. The external visitor speaks with young people, staff, social workers and other interested parties to gain their views of how the home functions. Young people in the main say that they have a good experience living at the home, and social workers speak positively about the home and the support it provides. The manager responds to these reports and any actions raised, demonstrating a commitment to improving the service for the young people. In addition, the manager also monitors the home on a regular basis. She demonstrates a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for further development. This is reflected within records and meetings held with senior managers within the local authority about placements at the home and recent incidents of instability and increased challenging behaviours.

At the previous inspection, a recommendation was made in relation to ensuring key workers monitored young people's placement plans. This has been followed and any

changes recorded on individual plans to ensure all staff are aware of these.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.