

SC039689

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is one of a number of homes operated by the local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children. There are currently five children accommodated in the home, three children were spoken to as part of this inspection.

The current manager has been in post since January 2019 and was registered in July 2019.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 August 2019

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 24 April 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Two compliance notices were issued in September 2018 following a monitoring visit to the home. These were found to be met in October 2018.

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; positive responses to other children and adults. 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; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or	31/10/2019

potentially violent behaviour by children; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(ix)(xi)(xii)(xiii))	
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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi))	31/10/2019
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 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))	31/10/2019
The care planning standard The care planning standard is that children receive effectively	31/10/2019

planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14(1)(a))	
Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4))	31/10/2019
Behaviour management policies and records 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. (Regulation 35(1)(a)(b)(2)(3)) In particular systems of rewards and sanctions should be transparent, personalised and fairly applied.	31/10/2019
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 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)) In particular the registered manager should review and establish thresholds for serious events.	31/10/2019

Recommendations

- Staff should understand what they must do to prevent bullying of children by other children or adults. Staff should be able to recognise and address different types of abuse, such as peer abuse, cyber-bullying and bullying in day-to-day relationships in the home. Registered persons must ensure that procedures for dealing with allegations of bullying are in place and staff have the skills required to intervene, protect and address bullying behaviours effectively. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.16)
- The specific responsibilities of the home towards supporting the health and well-being of each child should be agreed with the placing authority and recorded in the child's placement plan. It is the joint responsibility of the registered person and the placing authority that this is agreed at the time of placement ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.7)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Progress for children is mixed, with children doing well in some areas and not progressing so well in others. Similarly, experiences are varied, with children living through some poor events in their daily lives, but also enjoying some positive experiences.

Children are making good progress in education; their attendance has improved and they have been supported by staff to sit their GCSE exams.

The home has undergone refurbishment and now has pictures of children on holiday and doing activities on display. One child, assisted by staff, has re-decorated and personalised her bedroom. However, inspectors noticed that some of the DVDs in the communal areas of the home, were not appropriate for the age of some children in the home.

Children are supported to engage with health services. However, there were delays in registering one young person with a GP and organising their immunisations. Furthermore, staff don't always seek medical support and advice. For example, there is no record of the outcome of one child asking for help when her emotional health was low. Another child expressed pain after an assault and there is no record of what help, if any, was given.

Children have recently enjoyed a holiday and regular children's meeting are used to plan activities in line with children's wishes. Staff engage children in and outside of the home

with activities such as baking, arts and crafts and days out. The staff regularly take part in a 'feed the homeless' charity event, cooking and providing food to give to homeless people, which encourages children to feel like part of the community.

Routines and boundaries in the home are inconsistent and are not tailored to children's individual needs and ages. For example, bedtimes are the same for all children regardless of ages. A lack of personalised planning means that incentive programmes and sanctions are inconsistently applied. Children confirmed this when speaking to inspectors, saying they are unfairly treated.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Transitions in and out of the home are not always planned. Impact risk assessments have not always fully considered all the risks for children and whether staff can meet their needs. Matching is not sufficiently analysed by managers. One child was admitted to the home without a risk assessment and clear guidance for staff. This meant that the potential for this child going missing was not responded to correctly. This lack of good practice potentially increases risks for vulnerable children.

Records of serious incidents that take place at the home are often incomplete. They lack clear detail of staff responses and do not aid learning or reflection about how practice can be improved.

Bullying has been an issue in this home. Despite concerns, there is no separate monitoring and review of bullying. This means that patterns and trends cannot be identified to aid the safety of children. Responses to incidents have not always fully considered the needs of victims. Furthermore, staff have not received any training on bullying, despite this being identified by managers in the last full inspection as a training need.

The frequency of incidents where young people self-harm have significantly reduced for children. However, staff have not received training about self-harm, which would further improve their practice.

Direct work with children is limited. This reduces the opportunities for staff to address the behaviours of children and offer them assistance about how to improve their behaviours.

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

The home has experienced inconsistency and changes in management. The current registered manager is an experienced and qualified manager, who, supported by two experienced committed deputy managers is keen to raise standards in the home. The consistent staff team are resilient and supportive of one another.

Staff told inspectors that they feel motivated and supported by managers. One member

of staff said '[the manager] listens to our suggestions... always available if we need him.'

Feedback gathered by managers is overwhelmingly positive about staff and the service they provide. One professional wrote that the home had, 'A lovely welcoming atmosphere...Young people and staff were really cheerful and happy to be here. A really nice, homely place.'

Inspectors found shortfalls in the monitoring and oversight of records. Managers have failed to implement a robust system to ensure that they can respond to any gaps in recording. For example, training records show that there are gaps in mandatory training for staff, as well as gaps in checks to make sure that staff are suitable before they are employed.

Staff have had not always received supervision in line with the homes policy. Records for one new member of staff to the home show that they have not had a supervision session for three months. Staff meetings have on occasion been cancelled. This limits opportunities for learning and reflection on incidents at the home for staff.

Notifications have not always been made following serious incidents when children have gone missing from the home because the manager has not established a clear threshold of when an event is serious in line with regulation and therefore requires notification to Ofsted.

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: SC039689

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: PO Box 78, County Hall, Fishergate, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: John Simpson

Registered manager: Warren Howarth

Inspectors

Jessica Forshaw, social care inspector
Mandy Williams, social care inspector

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