

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 owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, six children were living in the home. Four children were spoken to by inspectors.

The home has not had a registered manager since June 2025. An acting manager is in place.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 October 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 23 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/07/2024	Full	Good
26/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/10/2022	Full	Good
29/03/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Staff do not always listen to and respond to children's expressed wishes and feelings. When children have asked for changes to their home environment, this has not been acted on.

Children's needs have not been carefully considered when they are moved to live together. Some children said that they feel threatened by other children and do not feel safe living in their home.

Inappropriate behaviours are not consistently challenged; a child was observed vaping inside the home without any intervention from staff. This lack of boundaries and guidance undermines their ability to promote positive behaviour.

The communal areas of the home are well decorated, and most children's rooms are comfortable and personalised to their taste. However, one of the children's rooms was unclean and their furniture was damaged. There is a lack of consistency in the care that children receive from staff.

Despite the safeguarding concerns, some children have lived in the home for a long time. They have made progress from their starting points and have developed in confidence. All children are in some form of education. Staff support them to go to school or college. They have the opportunity to learn and socialise with peers.

Staff engage with children in activities such as baking, and they have been on holiday with staff and enjoy days out together.

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

There is limited oversight of children's phone usage, resulting in some children engaging in inappropriate late-night calls with unknown individuals. This has negatively affected other children, particularly those attending school or college, as their sleep is being disrupted.

Staff have allowed a child to travel unsupervised without adequate information. When the child subsequently went missing, staff did not know where they were or who they were with. There is an inconsistent response when children go missing. Staff do not always follow children's risk management plans.

Staff discovered that a child had brought weapons into the home, which were promptly removed. This incident raises serious concerns about the ability of children to introduce potentially dangerous items into the environment, posing risks to themselves, staff and other children.

Additionally, there have been notable instances of threats exchanged between children. The current assessment of peer-to-peer risk is insufficient, leaving children vulnerable to harm from one another.

Staff do not provide direct support to children to help them understand potential risks, address those risks, or develop the skills needed to keep themselves safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There are insufficient staff on duty during the evenings and nights. Staff cannot respond effectively when children go missing or incidents occur. This failure to respond appropriately places children at significant risk.

Managers have not maintained appropriate oversight of incidents, with no clear systems to ensure that all concerns are identified, recorded and addressed in a timely manner. This has led to missed opportunities to safeguard children and to evaluate patterns or trends that could inform improvements required to care practices.

Recording systems are poorly organised, making it difficult and time-consuming to locate essential records. This undermines transparency and hinders the ability to demonstrate compliance with regulatory requirements.

There has been a failure to notify the regulator of a serious allegation made by a child, which is a breach of statutory requirements. In addition, the independent visitors' reports are often late to arrive with the regulator. This raises concerns about the home's commitment to external accountability and safeguarding.

Casual staff working at the home do not receive supervision of their practice. As a result, they lack opportunities to reflect on their interactions with children or enhance their professional skills. This represents a missed opportunity for managers to support staff development and strengthen the overall team.

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 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 on signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and 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)(v)(vi)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that safety plans and risk assessments are known to staff and are followed consistently. In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff complete direct work with children to help them understand how to keep safe. In particular, the registered person must ensure that the risk that children pose to each other is assessed.	8 December 2025

* 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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 1(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(d)(e)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that there are sufficient staffing levels in the home to meet the needs of all children. In particular, the registered person must ensure that they implement an effective monitoring system to ensure that there is an improved level of oversight and evaluation of significant events in the home. In particular, the registered person must ensure that casual staff receive supervision of their practice.	8 December 2025
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.	8 December 2025

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that an explanation is given to each child as soon as reasonably practicable after the child’s arrival about— the children’s guide; how to make a complaint or representations in relation to the home or the care the child receives and how any such complaint or representations will be dealt with; and what advocacy support or services are available to the child, how the child may access that support or those services and any entitlement the child may have to independent advocacy provision. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(d)(i)(ii)(iii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children are listened to and their views are acted on particularly if they are saying that they do not feel safe.	
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))	8 December 2025

The registered person must ensure that significant incidents are notified to Ofsted.	
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* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person and staff should encourage children to take a proactive role in looking after their day-to-day health and well-being. This specifically relates to the use of electronic cigarettes and the risks to the child's health. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 34, paragraph 7.10')
- The registered person should make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. The independent persons report should be timely and contain information which is helpful to the registered person. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 55, paragraph 10.24')

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Claire Rose-Dudley

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Cathy Wilkins, Social Care Inspector
Sophie Thomson, Social Care Inspector

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