

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 is currently no registered manager for this service.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 April 2018

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 good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 16 August 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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 behaviour management policies and records regulation 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 (3)(a)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	30/05/2018
The positive relationship standard is that— children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on mutual respect and trust; 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; In particular, the standard requires the registered person to ensure that staff— 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 potentially violent behaviour by children.	30/05/2018
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	30/05/2018

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; In particular, risk assessments and behaviour management plans should be updated after incidents and include strategies and actions to keep children safe.	
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Recommendations

- Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- 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 (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 56, paragraph 11.4)

Inspection judgements

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

Progress for children is mixed. One young person has had a successful transition to a foster care placement and the management and staff at the home have played an active part in supporting this transition. The young people currently living in the home are doing well in some areas and not progressing so well in others. Similarly, some children are living through varied day-to-day experiences, but they are forging positive relationships with staff.

One young person who has a long-term health need has been supported to attend appointments and is due to start treatment after a long period of refusal. Staff have been sensitive and resolute in their support of this issue.

The use of cannabis, alcohol and smoking is a concern for some young people, yet there is limited work completed with young people to address these issues. Staff have sought professional services to work with young people, but their engagement is poor; this puts their health and well-being at risk. Although young people who self-harm are referred to professional services, staff have not always arranged key-work sessions with the children in line with their plans. This means that children are not given the opportunity to discuss their needs or the support that they require.

Some children are making progress in education, despite erratic attendance and inconsistent staff practice in the home. When young people are not attending school, the management works with other agencies to rectify this. However, plans for young people who do not have an educational placement, or who refuse to attend school, are not clear or sufficient to meet the needs of young people. For some young people, there is no plan to meet their individual needs. Where a plan is in place, these are not always followed by staff and lead to an inconsistent approach to young people.

Children are encouraged to engage in activities; however, despite planning by staff they are often reluctant to engage, or refuse to attend. Furthermore, activities are sometimes cancelled due to poor behaviour or lack of school attendance.

Staff have very good relationships with families, some of whom have previously had difficult relationships with professionals and services. Staff arrange appropriate contact with family and friends and, for some, contact has increased, enabling them to meet with their extended family. However, for other young people, contact with family members that has previously been positive has decreased. Another young person, whose plan is to return home, has failed to engage with their rehabilitation plan.

Although young people know how to complain, one young person told the inspector that they are reluctant to do so as 'nothing is done'. However, regular meetings are held with young people and they are given the opportunity to share their views.

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

Risk assessments and individual behaviour support plans for young people are not always updated after incidents. The plans do not contain clear, proactive strategies and actions for staff. This means that behaviour is not always challenged effectively, leading to inconsistencies in practice and increased risk to children, other young people in the home, and to staff.

Additionally, plans and assessments are not cohesive; for example, one young person is at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE). A CSE viability assessment is in place indicating significant unmet needs and high risk, but this is not recorded in the child's daily care plan.

Sanctions are also poorly recorded, with the effectiveness of the sanction not always explored, and children's views not always recorded. Additionally, where sanctions have

been ineffective and young people's negative behaviour continues, there has been no reflection on measures used and what might be more effective. This means that current measures of control are having little impact on behaviour.

When young people are missing from the home, staff undertake detailed chronologies of actions taken. However, when young people return, there is little evaluation of missing from home incidents or learning from return home interviews with young people.

Staff and managers undertake a range of training in safeguarding matters and have further training planned on key areas including bullying and self-harm to increase the knowledge and skills of staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has been without a registered manager since February 2018 and is currently being managed by an experienced, qualified registered manager from another service within the organisation.

The current acting manager has an in-depth knowledge of the young people in the home and recognises both the strengths and weaknesses of the home. He is keen, with support of senior management, to improve the service.

The manager has identified that the home is not meeting the needs of some young people and has requested that new placements are found for some young people. However, for one young person recently placed, the impact risk assessment failed to adequately assess and plan the impact of the placement on the young person and others in the home. As a result, this placement has quickly broken down and has led to further risk-taking behaviour by the young person.

Staff receive regular supervision and, despite having an unsettled and difficult period in the home, the staff have felt well supported by their managers. Staff are well trained and are either qualified to an appropriate level, are currently undertaking a relevant course, or are new to the service. This means that children receive support from suitably qualified staff.

Staff work effectively with a number of agencies, including mental health teams, the drug and alcohol service and the virtual school service.

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 homes

Registered provider: SC039689

Registered provider address: Lancashire County Council, PO Box 78, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Paul McIntyre

Registered manager: vacant post

Inspector

Jessica Forshaw, social care inspector



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