

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 operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to six children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2019.

At the time of this inspection, six children lived in this home.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 25 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/10/2022	Full	Good
29/03/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
20/08/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

The manager and staff ensure that children's placements are extremely well planned. They understand that moves into and out of the home are difficult for children. Assessments of children's needs are effective and consider how each child may adapt to the change.

Children are looked after by a consistent and dedicated staff team. New casual staff have the same robust recruitment checks as permanent staff and undertake mandatory training. This ensures that all staff are appropriate and safe people to work with children.

Progress in education is slow, and attendance for some children is very limited. Some children attend alternative education settings on a reduced timetable. A lack of routine and structure does not promote children's engagement in education. Staff do not show that they are proactive in challenging children who refuse to attend school.

Staff meet children's health needs. They support children to attend medical appointments. If required, children receive specialist support for their mental health and well-being. Crisis support teams provide urgent care for children with mental health issues.

Staff are not consistent in addressing children's unwanted behaviours. Staff have sometimes failed to address behavioural issues. Incidents in the home have increased recently. This has a negative impact on children and staff. Children do not always feel safe, due to a lack of boundaries and challenge.

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

Staff said that they have not always felt equipped to manage children's behaviours. This has led to incidents where staff have required police assistance. As a result, children do not always feel supported when they are in crisis. However, some relationships between staff and children are positive. These relationships enable children to manage their feelings.

When children go missing from the home, staff take appropriate action. This ensures that children are safe. Staff go in search of children to return them to the home. On their return, children receive return home interviews from an independent person. Effective staff action means that incidents of children going missing have reduced.

Staff do not manage children's use of the internet effectively. They do not understand the risks that the internet poses for children. Staff training in this area is

not up to date. This fails to support them in developing strategies to ensure children's safety. Children can access inappropriate content. Staff are not always aware of who children are in contact with on their mobile phones. Staff do not check mobile phone use. This means that children could be vulnerable.

Staff have used physical intervention. This is as a last resort to ensure that children do not hurt themselves or others. The focus of interventions is to de-escalate situations. The manager has some oversight of incidents. Children have discussions after incidents to help them talk through their feelings. However, debriefs with staff are not consistent. This contributes to low staff morale.

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

Managers are enthusiastic about ensuring that children receive high standards of care. The registered manager is aware of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. He has plans in place to drive improvement. Staff spoken to reported that they enjoy working in the home and feel supported.

Staff receive regular supervision from the management team. Staff value this time and feel that this supports their development. Staff have annual appraisals. However, records are not always accurate or about the correct member of staff.

There are significant gaps in staff mandatory training. The system used for monitoring staff training is not effective. This limits the manager's oversight.

Managers and staff work well with other professionals. These positive relationships mean that communication is effective. This helps to ensure that children receive the support they need.

The location risk assessment fails to consider all risks. There is no contribution from other relevant professionals. This fails to consider the impact of community risks.

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 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. (Regulation 12 (1)(a)(i)) In particular, the registered person needs to ensure that children are safe when accessing the internet and that suitable restrictions are in place.	1 November 2023
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2)) In particular, the registered manager must review the suitability of the location of the home and include potential risks. Consultation with relevant agencies must be included.	1 November 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(c)) In particular, staff should receive up-to-date training relevant to the children they care for, in line with the mandatory	1 November 2023

requirement. Staff appraisal records must not relate to another member of staff.	
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— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h)) In particular, this relates to ensuring that there is sufficient management oversight of incidents and that debriefs are offered to all involved staff.	1 November 2023
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(iv)(v)) In particular, when children refuse to attend school, ensure that plans are put in place for learning opportunities in the home.	1 November 2023

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: Lancashire County Council

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

Responsible individual: Gwyneth Monk

Registered manager: Warren Howarth

Inspector

Sally Mitchell, Social Care Inspector

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