

1270568

Registered provider: Care Today Children's Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider operates and runs this home. It provides care for up to four children or young people. The appropriately qualified registered manager has been managing the home since its registration in May 2018.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 February 2020

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 16 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/10/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children and young people are happy at this home and they have progressed in their own unique ways. The staff have got to know the children and young people well and talk about them fondly. The mutually positive relationships are built on trust and respect, and the children and young people feel confident about talking to staff about any issues. Older young people are protective of the younger ones, which mimics positive sibling relationships. The children and young people's sense of identity is promoted, which helps them to gain in confidence.

Some children and young people have moved out or are due to move soon. This has been due to risky behaviours and serious incidents. Staff, despite their interventions, have not consistently been able to guarantee everyone's safety.

The children and young people engage in most of their health appointments. Discussion of relevant health matters, such as smoking, and consent issues help them to make informed choices. Therapeutic sessions with key workers provide indirect support to help staff to meet specific children and young people's needs. One young person's completion of first aid training prepares them to respond to minor or serious illness or injury should they need to.

Most of the children and young people have refused to attend their education provisions, which is limiting their future prospects. This is despite the staff team's attempts to talk to them about the importance of education and help them to re-engage in their education plans. One young person's positive work ethic has resulted in them finding employment, but their refusal to share the employer details makes this a potentially unsuitable arrangement. The registered manager is addressing this with other professionals.

The children and young people's activities provide fun times and positive distraction. Photographs, some of which are exhibited in bound photo books, contribute to each child and young person's life story.

The children and young people's views are acted on appropriately and they know how to complain. Children and young people have access to independent advocates who represent their rights and entitlements when they need it.

The children and young people's time with their family and friends is facilitated by the staff. Some children and young people's time with family has extended to overnight stays, which is supported by staff who carry out welfare visits.

Independence promotion is a real strength of this home. Older young people preparing to move into semi-independence are supported every step of the way to ensure a smooth and positive move.

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

The children and young people are helped to take age-appropriate risks, which nurtures their independence. One-to-one staffing protects younger children's significant vulnerabilities. Positive comments from the children and young people confirm their sense of safety in the home.

The children and young people's risk assessments are updated when new risks arise. This ensures that all of the staff understand and can respond to the risks, to promote the children and young people's safety and welfare. However, the risk assessments have not been consistently updated when changes have been made to ensure a true picture of risks and the strategies required to counter them.

The staff talk to the children and young people about risk from grooming and criminal exploitation. With respect to one current concern regarding a young person's employment activity outside of the home, the expectations to dissuade the young person's involvement have not been followed consistently. Consequently, in a bid to secure information, staff have inadvertently transported the young person in close proximity to their employment route. The registered manager has addressed this issue to prevent a further occurrence.

Missing-from-care incidents have reduced significantly. However, when a young person went missing, the relevant records did not include what the young person was wearing prior to them going missing. Issues raised by the police with the home when staff have not been responsive to their calls during the sleep-in hours are being addressed with the police to improve future communication.

Longer gaps between physical interventions over shorter periods demonstrate the children and young people's capacity to self-regulate better. Challenging behaviour is managed through routines, boundaries, activities and positive consequences. Incidents of bullying are recognised and addressed so that children and young people do not live in intimidation and fear.

Allegations against the staff are managed in consultation with the designated officer in the local authority and relevant professionals, and have resulted in unfounded outcomes.

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

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She has high expectations for the children and young people to reach their goals. The registered manager has an in-depth understanding of the children and young people's personalities and their plans. Her relationships with all of the children and young people are positive.

Staff supervision is regular and reflective, and team morale is improving. Staff performance issues are addressed to promote professional practice. Mandatory and

bespoke training supports how the staff care for the children and young people. However, the formal staff training programme is majorly geared towards older young people. This does not assure that the staff team has the full and established range of skills and competence in place before the home agrees to accept younger children.

The registered manager has reflected on the shortfalls raised previously and has also addressed the previous requirement and good practice recommendation. The current action plan for the home steers how the registered manager intends to continuously improve the service. This includes the robust matching of all children and young people to minimise any further breakdowns. Consequently, no further children or young people will be admitted until it is safe and appropriate to do so.

The registered manager's reduced presence in the home is empowering the staff to take more responsibility in the direct care of the children and young people. However, the communication mechanisms between the registered manager and deputy have not been consistently strong, which has led to the registered manager not being able to fully account for some delegated matters that she still holds overall responsibility for.

The records in the home are not maintained to a consistently good standard, which is not helpful for children and young people who may wish to access their records in the future. Not all of the recordings accord with the needs of younger children. For example, institutional language used in some of the records is not child-friendly, and lacks empathy and clarity. Some records may leave some incidents open to misinterpretation.

Despite the relevant fire training taking place, fire safety practice in the home is not sufficiently robust. This is because the self-closing fire doors are propped open with chairs and other items, which impedes the doors' closing function on the sound of the alarm. This does not comply with the home's fire risk assessment. One safeguarding matter has not been notified to Ofsted. This prevents Ofsted from evaluating safeguarding practice in the home. The rationale for the key-lock devices on the internal doors in the home is not included in the statement of purpose to ensure transparent information for all stakeholders and Ofsted.

Most professionals report regular communication from the home which ensures that they are kept up to date about the children and young people's progress.

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 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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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)(2)(c)(h)) In particular: ■ Quality assure all records to ensure that they are precise, unambiguous, up to date and recorded to a consistently good standard. ■ Ensure that risk assessments are consistently updated when changes have been made to ensure a true picture of risks and the strategies to counter them. ■ Ensure that the staff training schedule includes specific training for the staff team to care for younger children. ■ Strengthen the communication mechanism between the registered manager and the deputy manager to ensure that the registered manager can account for all matters even when she is absent from the home.	31/03/2020
Keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	31/03/2020

Specifically, include details about the practice of having the key locks on the doors of communal rooms in the home.	
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)) In particular, cease the practice of wedging or propping open all fire doors.	31/03/2020
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)(e))	31/03/2020

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: 1270568

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Today Children's Services

Registered provider address: Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 6LR

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Julia Walker

Inspector

Jacqueline Malcolm, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020