

2526893

Registered provider: The Partnership of Care Today

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company that operates a number of children's homes across the country. This home is registered to provide care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home offers children who are at school leaving age support to gain skills in preparation for independent living. The registered manager has been in post since the home opened in October 2019 and has a level 5 qualification in leadership and management.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021. We last visited this setting on 24 November 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 24 November 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not applicable		
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Three children live in the home. The manager and staff are knowledgeable about the children and speak affectionately about them. Children like living in the home and feel that they are well supported. For example, staff help children to develop practical life skills that will help them in the future.

The home is well furnished and decorated. Children have their own bedroom, kitchen and sitting area in self-contained apartments within the home. They can also access the communal kitchen and lounge. This gives children the privacy they need as they develop their independence, and it means that support is on hand from staff should they need it.

Staff encourage children to attend education and gain employment. When there are barriers to children's education, the manager ensures that children receive support from external services to overcome these barriers. This enables children to make progress from their starting points.

Staff support children to keep-in-touch with people who are important to them. Children feel comfortable to invite friends and family to spend time with them at their home. Staff provide opportunities for children to enjoy a range of activities, although they often choose to spend time with friends.

Children's health is promoted well. Staff speak to children about sensitive topics such as sexual health and what constitutes a safe relationship. Staff ensure that all children register with local services and have a good understanding of what is available to them. Due to COVID-19, there is a delay in arrangements for one child to attend their annual health assessment. The registered manager is keeping this under review to make sure this happens as soon as practicable.

Three children benefited from planned moves on from the home. One child moved into their own property and two children returned to live with family members. The manager assesses the needs of new children and considers these alongside those already resident. However, she has not promptly arranged training to upskill staff to understand a specific need for one child. In addition, the manager does not clearly consider the location of the home, or any potential challenges related to this, when making decisions about new children coming to live at the home.

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

On the rare occasions when children do not return home as expected, staff take effective action. The registered manager and staff work well with partner agencies to manage risks that can be associated with children who are not where they should be. They are proactive in sharing information that helps to locate children, and they

use their local knowledge to search for them. Staff welcome children home and ensure that they are provided with an opportunity to speak to a person who is independent, to talk about why they went missing from home and what happened while they were away.

During this period, children have not been involved in any incidents which required staff to use physical intervention in order to keep them and others safe. Children speak positively about staff and feel able to talk to them about any worries or concerns. No allegations against staff have been made.

The manager and staff have a good understanding of children's risks and vulnerabilities. Children's plans provide staff with guidance on how to support each child and manage and reduce risks. Staff spend time talking to children about risky behaviours and consequences. Children complete short courses on subjects such as youth violence, substance misuse and online safety. This supports children to develop their knowledge and helps them to learn how to keep safe.

Children have individualised routines and clear boundaries in place. This helps them to understand what is expected of them. The incentive system implemented by staff motivates children to make sensible choices about their behaviour. On most occasions, children respond well to their structured plans, which promote their independence and help them to stay safe.

One new staff member has joined the team. They have been safely recruited. Good recruitment practices reduce the risk of children being cared for by unsuitable individuals.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager and staff work well with parents and professionals. Effective systems are in place for sharing information. When there are serious concerns about a child's safety, there is a well-coordinated multi-agency response. The registered manager advocates on behalf of children and challenges others when she feels they are not fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. This practice promotes children's welfare and progress.

Team meetings take place regularly. Meetings provide staff with an opportunity to reflect on practice and discuss children's plans. The inspector observed positive and reflective discussions between staff and between staff and children. This good practice creates a learning culture that aids improvement and helps children to have positive experiences.

Children receive consistent care from a qualified and experienced staff team. Staff feel well supported by the registered manager, who ensures that they receive regular supervision and an annual appraisal. However, supervision records lack detail, which may create difficulties if these records are needed to be referred to in the future.

The home's workforce development plan does not provide clear information about how staff development will be promoted or nurtured moving forward. This is a missed opportunity to review and plan staff training needs.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- 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. In particular, consider the location of the home when making decisions about new children coming to live there. In addition, where a child has a specific need ensure that staff receive relevant training. (Guide to the children's homes regulations, including quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should consider that it is good practice for a note of the content and/or outcomes of supervision sessions to be kept. Specifically, that supervision records contain enough details so that they can be referred to and relied on in the future, as needed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)

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: 2526893

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Kyra Knight

Inspector

Helen Malanaphy, Social Care Inspector

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