

2672559

Registered provider: Care Today (Children's Services) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private provider. It offers care for up to two children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection. They both spoke with the inspector about their experiences living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2022.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 December 2023

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: 4 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/01/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children living in the home make good progress in all areas of their lives. They are supported to form trusting relationships with staff who care about them. The manager and staff implement clear routines and provide consistent care, which helps children to live together happily.

Both children attend full-time education. This is a significant change for one child as they had poor attendance before living in the home. The other child's school is a distance from the home. Staff transport him daily to enable him to remain in his school of choice. This supports children's learning and provides them with stability.

Staff have built positive relationships with the people who are important to the children. Staff regularly take the children to see their family. Family members are also invited to spend time with their children in the home. One family member said that communication from staff is always 'on point'. Parents of both children stated that the care provided by the team is helping their child to make progress.

Staff encourage children to take part in activities and to join local sports and dance teams. Staff support children to pursue interests that they enjoy, as well as encourage them to try new things. This helps children to build positive peer relationships, develop their confidence and have fun.

The home is generally well maintained. Children have access to spaces where they can socialise with each other or relax separately. However, delays in repairs being made to the doorbell, front step and kitchen roof detract from the welcoming environment the manager is trying to maintain.

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

Children feel safe living in the home. They can speak to any staff member when they have a concern. Children are aware of their own risks and are developing healthy coping strategies. However, risk plans do not capture all known risks, and records do not always clearly reflect what action is being taken by staff to keep children safe.

Staff support children's emotional well-being. They respond to children's needs when they are struggling with their emotions. Staff understand what helps children and are resilient when faced with challenges. Consequently, there has been a reduction in the number of incidents when staff have needed to hold children to keep them and others safe.

Staff care about the children and spend time talking to them about issues that are affecting them. However, opportunities to link these discussions with children's individual care plans and identified risks have been missed.

Children rarely go missing from this home. However, staff know how to respond when incidents occur. They alert the relevant professionals and search the local area. Children have appropriate supervision by staff inside and outside the home.

Changes to locks on external doors mean that children are sometimes unable to leave the home freely and without staff. This is not due to safeguarding concerns and is unnecessarily restrictive for children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is child-centred and models a proactive and hands-on approach to the team. He is working towards the relevant qualification.

Staff feel supported and valued. They say that they are happy working in the home. This is reflected in the low staff turnover and means that children are cared for by a consistent team of staff who know them well. The manager also works shifts in the home. However, records do not reflect all the hours staff work at the home. This reduces oversight of who is working in the home.

The manager and staff have developed effective relationships with external professionals. They communicate regularly and advocate on behalf of the children. The social worker for one child stated, 'They never let [name of child] down.'

The manager holds regular team meetings and staff supervision sessions. This helps the team to share relevant information, such as upcoming tasks. However, records do not consistently evidence reflective practice or appropriate challenge by the manager. This is a missed opportunity for the manager to evidence how the team is supported to develop.

The manager has oversight of practice in the home. However, this oversight is not always clear and recording shortfalls limit opportunities for the manager to identify patterns and trends or to evidence how children's views are used to further improve the care they receive.

Staff have access to a range of training opportunities. However, training records are not well maintained, and it is not always clear when staff have completed training relevant to their role. Training to meet a child's individual care needs has not been completed in a timely manner. Although this has not had an impact on the child, it does not ensure that all staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet children's needs.

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 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 staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	1 March 2024

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that: there is effective oversight of all aspects of the day-to-day running of the home; all staff access relevant training to safely meet children's needs; key conversations with children support them to fulfil their potential.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all records are clear, contain relevant information and are signed and dated by the author.	1 March 2024
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)) Specifically, accurate records must be kept of the actual hours worked by all staff, including the manager.	1 March 2024
The registered person must ensure that— any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and	1 March 2024

allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))

This specifically relates to ensuring that the locks on the front and back doors are replaced with suitable thumb locks.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children live in a warm and welcoming environment that has a homely feel, and that repairs are made to the front doorstep, doorbell and kitchen roof. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Plans should be updated regularly to ensure that staff are able to manage the risks on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

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: 2672559

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Today (Children's Services) Limited

Registered provider address: Care Today Children's Services, 2nd Floor,
Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, Stockport SK2 6LR

Responsible individual: Anthony Garmory

Registered manager: Matthew Noble

Inspector

Sarah Gilbert, Social Care Inspector

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