

2711785

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

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to 2 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2023.

At the time of this inspection, 2 children were living at the home. The inspector spoke with both children about their experiences living at the home.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 March 2026

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: 29 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/01/2025	Full	Good
16/01/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive a good standard of care from a stable and consistent team of staff who know them well. Staff are committed to providing good-quality care and support to the children. Children live at this home for a long time, which provides them with extended periods of stability. One professional said, 'This is most settled [name of child] has been and I am really impressed with the care and support they receive.'

The staff actively promote children's education and work collaboratively with school head teachers to devise bespoke timetables and provide one-to-one tutoring to meet the individual needs of the children. They use incentives and rewards to increase children's engagement with learning. This has resulted in improvements in attendance for both children. One child is now on track to achieve good grades in their GCSEs and is making plans for further education that align with their aspirations.

Staff hold regular discussions with children to help them develop healthier lifestyles, build their confidence, support their individuality, understand themselves and their emotions and develop independence skills. Discussions are carried out sensitively and demonstrate that staff show care and empathy. Staff use resources from educational websites to further support children's learning, development and progress. Staff also support children to complete training courses to aid their learning and understanding around key issues and changes in their life, such as leaving care, healthy relationships and maintaining a home.

Staff encourage children to engage in positive experiences and activities that are specific to their individual interests. Children engage in a wide range of activities, including movie nights, pamper nights, go karting, fishing, golf, visiting theme parks, zoos and coffee shops, and children have enjoyed caravan holidays. This supports children to nurture their talents and grow in confidence. Staff create memory books to capture each child's time at the home.

The manager and staff understand the importance of children maintaining their family relationships. They organise family time and ensure that children are able to celebrate key dates and occasions with those who are important to them. Staff make sure that children have everything they need to feel comfortable so that these experiences are enjoyable. As a result, children are able to spend quality time with their families, strengthening important relationships and creating positive memories.

Staff create a warm, homely environment that feels like a family home. Children are relaxed and comfortable in their home. The home is well maintained and furnished, with children's photographs proudly displayed.

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

Staff build positive and trusting relationships with the children, and children identify staff as trusted adults who they can talk to about any concerns or worries they have. Staff respond to children's concerns warmly and sensitively. Children say that the staff have helped them with their mental health, education, family time and independence skills.

Allegations are taken seriously. The manager works closely with relevant professionals to ensure that investigations are thorough and children receive the right support during investigations. This helps to reassure children that they are being listened to and taken seriously. The manager takes appropriate action to address staff practice concerns.

Children rarely complain about their care. When complaints are made, they are taken seriously. Managers ensure that children speak with an independent person about the concerns raised. Children's views are listened to, and practice is adapted where necessary in response to their feedback. Staff work with children and adults to help repair relationships. Children are informed of the outcomes to their complaints.

The home's exterior door locks do not support health and safety and could present a hazard in the event of a fire. The home's fire risk assessment has not been reviewed or updated to reflect the changes made to the exterior locks. As a result, potential risks have not been fully considered or assessed, which does not ensure that appropriate measures are in place to keep children and staff safe.

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and reporting protocols. However, not all staff are aware of whistleblowing escalation procedures. This compromises safeguarding practice.

The manager ensures that staff complete training that is specific to children's individual needs, including self-harm, substance misuse, adverse childhood experiences, neurodiversity, child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. This ensures that staff have the knowledge and skills required to care for and support children effectively.

Staff respond appropriately to significant incidents and follow the home's protocols to safeguard children. They report concerns to relevant agencies, including the police, when required. The manager maintains effective communication with each child's professional network to ensure that appropriate support is sought and concerns are escalated appropriately. However, not all significant incidents are reported to the regulator. This limits the regulator's ability to maintain full oversight of incidents occurring at the home.

Staff respond effectively when children are missing from home. They follow agreed protocols and make every effort to locate children and encourage their safe return. When children return home, staff welcome them warmly and complete appropriate safe-and-well checks. This helps children to feel cared for and valued.

Room searches take place when there are concerns that children may be in possession of prohibited items. Children are made aware of the reasons for the search, and all room searches are recorded appropriately in line with the home's procedures.

Staff complete follow up work with children following incidents. This helps children to identify and understand risks and consequences. Staff support and encourage children to develop strategies to keep themselves safe. Children are spoken to about a wide range of potential risks, including healthy relationships, sexual health, online safety, drugs and alcohol and antisocial behaviour. Staff use online resources and training courses to aid their discussions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by an experienced manager and senior who are committed to achieving positive outcomes for children. Staff say that the management team is approachable and they feel fully supported. Staff are committed to their role and enjoy working at the home and supporting the children.

The manager has effective monitoring systems in place to ensure that the home is compliant with regulations. The manager uses information from the independent visits and monthly monitoring completed for the quality of care reports to identify shortfalls and areas for improvement.

Leaders and managers follow safer recruitment procedures. This means that staff are fully checked before they provide care to children. There are detailed induction plans in place to support new staff. These enable staff to complete training, familiarise themselves with the home's policies and procedures and get to know the children. This helps staff to understand the responsibilities of their role and prepares them well to support the children.

Staff receive regular, reflective and supportive supervision, and the manager is proactive in supporting career development. One staff member is currently being supported through the home's management pathway, while another is being supported to gain a counselling qualification.

Staff appraisals are completed routinely. They provide an opportunity for staff to reflect on their work over the year, recognising achievements and identifying areas of development. However, the manager does not seek feedback from children, colleagues or professionals to inform the appraisal process.

Team meetings take place regularly and are well attended. These meetings ensure that staff understand and follow children's individual risk assessments and routines, are aware of recording and reporting processes and work in line with the home's expectations. Managers also use these meetings to support staff development on topics such as managing and assessing risks, building positive relationships with children and understanding depression and anxiety. This development is supported by training hub

presentations and guidance from a well-established children's charity. This ensures that staff are well informed and promotes effective, collaborative working across the team.

The manager and staff communicate effectively with the children's professional networks. Professionals report that the manager and staff maintain open communication and keep them fully updated. One professional said, 'Communication is fantastic. The weekly reports are informative and the best I have received.' This enables the children's network to work collaboratively and respond proactively to the 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
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of fire. If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(30) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (1)(b) (2)(b)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that door locks for the property enable children and staff to exit the home in the event of a fire. Additionally, leaders and managers must ensure that the fire risk assessment is reviewed regularly and following any changes that may impact fire safety.	29 April 2026
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	29 April 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are fully aware of whistleblowing procedures, and they should report to an appropriate authority any concern they have about a child in the home being either at risk of, or already experiencing, significant harm. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9:15)
- The registered person should ensure that annual staff appraisals consider, where reasonable and practical, the views of children in the home and other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: 2711785

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Registered provider address: 2nd, Floor Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road,
STOCKPORT, Cheshire SK2 6LR

Responsible individual: Anthony Garmory

Registered manager: Carra Aspray

Inspector

Renée Sims, Social Care Inspector

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