

2736373

Registered provider: Care Today (Childrens Services) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private provider.

It provides care for up to two children who may experience emotional and/or social difficulties.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in September 2023. At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home and both children spoke to the inspector.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 December 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 19 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/11/2024	Full	Outstanding
23/01/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Two children live at the home. Both children have lived at the home since the last inspection. The children have made exceptional progress from their starting points due to the individualised and consistent care they receive from staff.

Throughout the inspection, the children were observed to have positive, supportive relationships with staff. Children were observed cooking, generally relaxing around the home and being supported to do their weekly food shopping. Children and staff were actively planning Christmas activities and shopping trips with the children.

Children's education needs are fully understood and supported. The manager and staff understand the barriers some children can face in education. They strive to advocate for children by working with education professionals to devise creative plans that reflect children's existing knowledge and skills. One child who had previously not been attending school for a significant period of time achieved excellent exam results, which has led them to pursuing further employment options.

Staff actively and consistently promote positive health outcomes for the children by engaging them in meaningful conversations about topics such as emotional health and wellbeing, drugs and alcohol and personal hygiene. Children are encouraged to attend and take an active role in their health appointments. Staff advocate for children who may have worries about health conditions and provide them with reassurance.

Staff consistently promote independence by engaging the children in tailored packages of independence support that unlock children's potential. Key work sessions are designed around each child's strengths and aspirations, empowering them to achieve meaningful goals and celebrate successes that build confidence and pride. One child has gained remarkable skills in cooking and likes to experiment with recipes. Another child is a volunteer for a local first-aid charity and has recently volunteered at large outdoor events where they have gained hands-on experience and knowledge.

Staff work consistently with the children to help them understand their individual plans so that they feel empowered and can make positive choices about their future. One child chairs their own review meetings with assistance from an independent reviewing officer. When the children do not understand decisions that are being made, the manager goes above and beyond to devise visual plans to help them recognise what is being said in a more child-centred way and one which does not undermine children's sense of ownership.

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

Risk assessment documents include comprehensive guidance and strategies that are easy to understand and that staff can follow. Staff know the children's risks extremely well and know how to report safeguarding concerns to the relevant agencies.

There is strong emphasis on ensuring that safeguarding practice is consistent across the team. The manager and staff demonstrate persistence and curiosity in understanding the complex needs of the children. Additionally, the manager is proactive in carrying out reflective, practice-related sessions with staff following any incidents of behaviour that are difficult to manage and to ensure that staff respond appropriately in these situations. This helps staff to learn from incidents and continually informs their practice with children.

There has been one incident of physical intervention at the home since the last inspection. Although staff are trained in physical intervention, their focus is on understanding why children may be upset and encouraging children to speak about their feelings. The manager has developed and implemented useful strategies and tools that help children consider their thoughts in a way that provides perspective and co-regulation. This helps children to feel less anxious about situations and generally reduces their worries and prevents situations from escalating.

The manager maintains clear oversight of all documents relating to the children, ensuring that any newly emerging needs and patterns in behaviour are identified and addressed in a team around the child approach. One child's independent reviewing officer said, 'The staff fully accept [name of child], they are attuned to their needs.'

The children can identify a trusted adult that they can talk to about any concerns, and they know how to make a complaint. Investigations into complaints are handled quickly and are reported to relevant professionals. Children are kept up to date with any complaint outcomes. This means children feel they are listened to and assures them that appropriate action is taken to safeguard them. On one occasion, a child had raised an issue about a member of staff's demeanour and how the child had found this frustrating. This was addressed promptly by the manager.

There are measures in place to ensure that the home is free from hazards. Regular fire drills are carried out to ensure that the children know what they need to do in the event of an emergency, and records confirm consistent fire evacuation procedures are followed. This demonstrates that the children live in a physically safe environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is motivational and aspirational and has high expectations of his team to provide exceptional care for the children. The manager works exceedingly hard to understand children's lived experiences, how these manifest in behaviour and how to adapt staff practice to any newly emerging needs the children may present with.

The manager has developed excellent working relationships with professionals involved in the children's care. He is a strong advocate, and when the children require explanation

about aspects of their care plan, he takes time to explain, as well as empowering them to have a voice when decisions are being made that they may not agree with.

Staff say the manager fully supports them in their roles. He fully acknowledges and recognises the emotional impact on staff when there are incidents of behaviour that are difficult to manage. He implements additional support or increases supervision to ensure that staff are receiving the appropriate support, which helps them to feel listened to and boosts staff morale and confidence. Consequently, the children are provided with care from a stable staff team.

Staff value supervision sessions, which takes place on a regular basis. Supervision records are clear and concise, highlighting individual professional development goals and how these can be achieved with support from the manager. This promotes staff engagement and impacts positively on motivation and staff retention. Reflective practice is a thread throughout discussions. Staff are provided with quality time in team meetings and supervision sessions to reflect on their practice, as well as to have open dialogue about practice-related matters and to learn from incidents.

Staff are familiar with the company's whistleblowing procedure, as well as what to do if they feel a closed culture is emerging. Staff are confident that, should they have a concern, this would be managed quickly and confidentially by senior managers.

Management oversight of staff practice is achieved through robust monitoring systems that enable managers to have full oversight of all aspects of the service. Quality assurance activity is highly effective and provides an additional layer of scrutiny, which helps to continuously improve the quality of practice across all aspects of care provision.

The manager has a sound understanding of the strengths of the home and the areas for development. There is a detailed plan for continued improvements to the home. Staff are up to date with their training and have received additional training specific to meeting children's complex needs.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff have the skills and confidence to communicate easily and understand the importance of listening to, involving and responding to the children they care for. They should also understand how children might communicate their feelings through their behaviour or non-verbally, especially where the child has a disability that does not allow them to communicate as others might. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.10)

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: 2736373

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Today (Childrens Services) Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Gary Wood

Registered manager: Ryan Knight

Inspector

Michelle Greenhalgh, Social Care Inspector

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