

SC005040

Registered provider: The Partnership of Care Today Children's Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A large provider of children's services operates this home. The home provides care for up to four children who have experienced childhood instability, resulting in trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2012 and holds a National Vocational Qualification at level 4 in leadership and management for care services.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 September 2021

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 12 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/09/2019	Full	Good
08/01/2019	Full	Good
21/11/2017	Full	Good
21/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have the opportunity to visit the home prior to moving in and they receive a friendly welcome on arrival, which helps them to settle in well. A child who has recently moved into the home told the inspector, 'It's actually fun here. It's sound.'

Children attend school full time and their attendance is generally excellent. Staff are aware of children's individual academic potential and work well with teachers to help children prioritise and progress with their learning. For example, staff are proud that one child has gained a part-time job and are working with the child, the employer and teachers to make sure that the child can enjoy the benefits of working without compromising his ability to achieve academically.

Staff prioritise children's health and well-being. Consequently, children enjoy good physical and emotional health. Children are supported to attend routine health appointments. When more-specialist support is needed, such as therapy or substance misuse services, staff work with relevant professionals to ensure a joined-up approach so that children get the support they need.

Staff encourage children to develop and use their talents. For example, with staff's support, one child has completed a refereeing course and has used this to secure opportunities to referee football matches for primary-aged children.

Children experience warm and nurturing relationships with staff and are aware that staff care about them. Staff know the children well and prioritise being emotionally available to support children's well-being. Being able to share worries and concerns with staff at their own pace enables children to develop strategies to manage challenges and anxieties well.

Clear routines and expectations help children to live together harmoniously and to increase their self-sufficiency skills. Children help with routine chores, such as tidying and washing up. When the time is right, children take increased responsibility for their own care, for example by managing an individual budget, shopping and cooking for themselves.

The house cat, pictures of children around the home and new sofas in the lounge give an inviting feel. However, some aspects of the physical environment require attention. For example, damage to a wall in the lounge is covered with the wrong shade of paint, a plug socket in the lounge does not work and there is no blind to obscure the window in the first-floor bathroom. In addition, children are unable to enter the ground floor shower room without staff's help. These shortfalls detract from children's experience of living in a comfortable and homely environment.

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

Children feel safe living at the home. Clear routines and boundaries, coupled with a consistent and proportionate response from staff when children test expectations, support children to feel secure. Day-to-day conversations and focused direct work with staff help children to reflect on their behaviour and how they could manage their responses in a more socially responsible way.

Staff are proactive in their thinking about risk reduction. For example, they are alert to the possibility that one child is more likely to go missing when in a particular place. Timely work with family members has helped to reduce the need for the child to visit the area, which promotes the child's well-being. On the one occasion that a child has been missing from the home, staff took appropriate action to support a safe return, including the child having the opportunity to talk with an independent person.

Managers act promptly when safeguarding issues arise. Effective working with the police and local authorities ensures that children's safety and well-being are promoted. In one situation, the detailed understanding of the manager about the local community helped to secure the immediate safety of a child. Following safeguarding incidents, staff review children's risk assessments. However, risk assessments do not always include key information about identified risks. This lack of clarity means that staff do not have all the information to hand to help them work with children to reduce risk.

Staff have undertaken a range of training to help them understand safeguarding expectations and how to support children when their behaviour challenges. Detailed records are kept of all incidents, including when staff have needed to physically hold a child for safety. The registered manager routinely oversees the records. However, on one occasion, the registered manager lacked curiosity about the way in which staff moved a child from a confined space. This limited the opportunity for reflection with staff about how to best respond should the behaviour shown by the child arise again.

The safe recruitment of staff enhances children's safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is an experienced manager who provides calm and child-focused leadership.

The considered approach of managers about staffing means that children benefit from care from staff who have a range of personal characteristics and skills. Building positive relationships with staff and focused direct work with children around equality and diversity help children to better understand and appreciate the differences between people.

There are good systems in place for managers to review children's progress and the quality of care. Regular staff meetings, supervision sessions and appraisals help staff to reflect on practice and to contribute to children's plans and service development. Staff told the inspector that they work effectively together and that they find their work rewarding. Consequently, the team is stable, and children benefit from spending time with adults who they like and trust.

The registered manager has reviewed the statement of purpose for the home. However, out-of-date information in the children's guide means that children moving into the home are not given current information relating to the operation of the home.

Managers do not keep staff rotas in accordance with regulation. Staff rotas are not clear about the specific times staff are on duty and they do not include any details about when the registered manager or the deputy manager are at work in the home. This means that rotas do not provide comprehensive information about who has been in contact with children should it be required in the future.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))	5 November 2021
The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (2)(a)) This includes a copy of the staff duty rota of persons working at the home, and a record of the actual hours worked.	5 November 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive and has appropriate boundaries in relation to children's behaviour. The home must also meet children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. This is specifically in relation to maintaining good physical conditions in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- The registered person should ensure that children are able to access all shared areas of their home, just as in a family home, unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home (regulation 21(c)(i)). Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home must only be made where they are intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. This is specifically in relation to children's access to the

ground floor shower room. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

- The registered person should review and update the children's guide, as necessary, and make sure that children are given an explanation of any changes. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.23)
- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint are kept which enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure that it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

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: SC005040

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Emma Coen

Inspector

Alison Cooper, 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 2021