

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC005040
Inspector	Matthew Hedges
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Care Today (Children's Services) Ltd
Registered person address	Care Today Children's Services, Lansdowne House 85 Buxton Road STOCKPORT Cheshire SK2 6LR
Responsible individual	Vivien Anne Snape
Registered manager	Emma Jane Coen
Date of last inspection	13/03/2014

Inspection date	19/11/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people have good outcomes and make progress in key areas of their lives. This is supported by consistent, individualised, high quality support provided by a knowledgeable staff team. Staff show a good awareness of safe working practice and are clearly committed to young people.

Young people talk positively about their relationships with staff and feel well cared for. Young people also confirm that they feel safe and that unsafe situations are well managed by staff. This is evident by their improving behaviour.

Management arrangements are strong. The Registered Manager understands the home's strengths and weaknesses and can demonstrate improvements that have been made. This enhances the service offered to young people and their families.

Some shortfalls were identified at this inspection. These relate to the homes Statement of Purpose, some aspects of record keeping, physical intervention, training and staff recruitment. In addition, young people are not always seen by their social worker or an independent person when they have been missing. The impact of these shortfalls is reduced by the relationships that exist between staff and young people and other processes that are in place.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It provides medium to long-term residential care and is owned by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
19/11/2013	Full	good
06/02/2013	Interim	good progress
10/10/2012	Full	good

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	compile in relation to the children's home a written statement (in these Regulations referred to as "the Statement of Purpose") which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1 (regulation 4 (1))	21/12/2014
5 (2001)	notify HMCI of any revision of the homes Statement of Purpose within 28 days (Regulation 5 (b))	21/12/2014
26 (2001)	ensure that no person is allowed to work at the children's home unless that person is fit to work at a children's home (Regulation 26 (1) (b))	21/12/2014
29 (2001)	maintain in the children's home the records specified in Schedule 4 and ensure that they are	21/12/2014

	kept up to date. (Regulation 29 (1))	
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that where there has been physical restraint, children's homes must be able to call on medical assistance as required and children are always given the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner (NMS 3.16)
- ensure that each home regularly reviews incidents of challenging behaviour, examines trends or issues emerging from this, to enable staff to reflect and learn to inform future practice (NMS 3.21)
- ensure that where a child goes missing and there is concern for their welfare, or at the request of a child who has been missing, staff arrange a meeting between the child and the responsible authority in private to consider the reasons for the child going missing. The home considers with the responsible authority what action should be taken to prevent the child going missing in future. Any concerns arising about the placement are addressed, as far as possible, in conjunction with the responsible authority (NMS 5.9)
- ensure that the learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and if necessary is updated. (NMS 18.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress in key areas of their life. They develop a positive self-view and are able to make and sustain attachments. Young people engage in work that helps them to understand their background and the events that have led up to them moving to the home. One Independent Reviewing Officer stated that young people, 'have a knowledge of their background which gives them peace and helps their understanding'. Young people stay in touch with their family and friends. This ensures that young people spend time with the people important to them. This helps them to further understand their personal history.

Young people understand important health issues and start to take increasing responsibility for their own health. This helps develop their independence and promotes their well-being. Young people's risk taking and offending behaviours reduce significantly. This helps them to secure better outcomes and allows them to focus on more positive aspects of their life. Some young people are actively involved in positive activities within the community including working with the police as junior cadets. Young people are rightly proud of their achievements and their self-esteem increases because of this.

Education attendance improves for young people. This includes young people who have previously missed significant periods at school. Education professionals talk positively about the improvements in attainment young people make because of this. This improvement is not limited to academic work. An Independent Reviewing Officer also commented that a young person manages their anger better and is more mature, 'which has improved their emotional well-being a lot'.

Young people's independence skills increase, as appropriate to their age and understanding. They clean their rooms and help with other household tasks; they also have bank accounts and save money regularly. Some young people cook and talk positively about their baking skills. Alongside this, young people engage actively in decisions affecting their lives. This ensures that they develop the skills required as they prepare to leave the home.

Quality of care **good**

Young people talk positively about their relationships with staff and the support they receive. It is clear that they feel staff are consistently concerned with their welfare. Young people describe the staff as, 'the best thing about the home' and rate the home as, 'outstanding'. Professionals also talk positively about the relationships that exist and the service the home provides. An Independent Reviewing Officer stated

they were, 'delighted with the home so far, they have done a great job'. A number of positive activities are offered to young people, these include educational activities, physical activities and exercise. This further develops relationships between staff and young people.

Individualised behaviour strategies are employed by staff. This ensures that young people are cared for consistently. They are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour. This helps young people to develop skills in managing conflict.

Young people's views impact on the running of the home. In addition, they are encouraged to take ownership of their care plans and comment on decisions made about their lives. This ensures that young people feel their opinions are valued which in turn improves their sense of self-worth. Staff help them to understand why their wishes cannot always be acted on. This helps young people to mature and reduces the frustration they may feel. Young people know how to complain. Complaints are rare and are handled appropriately by the Registered Manager.

Young people who do not speak English are also supported to communicate their views and wishes. This ensures that they have access to the same support as any other young person. This helps them to feel empowered and ensures that specific cultural and religious needs are respected and met. For example, one young person was supported to attend a service at a local Greek Orthodox Church.

Staff work with education providers to positively address barriers to educational progress and achievement. Young people's engagement in education increases because of this as does their attainment. One young person's tutor commented positively about the progress the young person had made and how supportive staff were of this. A young person explained that they had found going to education challenging but, 'staff try really hard'. The young person's social worker confirmed this. They talked positively about the range of options made available and were pleased at how much the young person's engagement had improved. This support helps young people to reach their potential.

Staff work with other agencies including education, the police and mental health services. This improves the consistency of the service offered to young people and ensures that they have access to the support they require.

The home is appropriately located, clean and generally well maintained. This helps to promote a sense of pride for both staff and young people. Young people talk positively about the home and particularly about their bedrooms, which are personalised. Damage to the home is rare. This is a significant improvement for some young people. This achievement is celebrated by staff which further develops young people's self-esteem.

Keeping children and young people safe **good**

Young people are clear that they feel safe in the home and the local area.

Young people's care plans identify risks and protective factors. These are regularly monitored and updated. This helps to protect young people. Consistent behaviour management strategies are applied which helps support young people to improve their behaviour. Neither staff nor young people identify bullying as an issue at the home.

There is minimal use of physical restraint, which is only used to prevent injury to staff or young people. Records do not always show that young people are offered the opportunity to be examined by a medical professional following a restraint. In addition, young people's risk assessments do not evidence that incidents of restraint are reviewed, or that potential issues are identified. This limits the opportunities for staff to reflect and for future practice to be informed. The impact of these shortfalls is reduced by the strong relationships between staff and young people and the infrequent use of physical intervention.

Some young people continue to go missing. This behaviour has reduced significantly since coming to live at the home. Social workers confirm this and talk positively about the efforts made by staff. Staff understand the potential risks when young people go missing and actively search them when they are away. This reinforces to young people that staff care about their welfare. Young people are welcomed back to the home when they return. Not all young people see their social worker or an independent person when they have been missing. The impact of this is reduced by the trust young people have in staff.

The home has strong and proactive relationships with the police. This ensures information is shared appropriately and a swift response to incidents of concern. This promotes young people's safety. Police officers talk positively about the home. One officer said they thought the home was, 'brilliant' stating, 'I can't sing their praises enough'. They also highlighted the improvements that young people have made noting, 'they have done great.' Police officers also highlighted the good relationships the home has developed in the community. This ensures that young people feel accepted.

The very large majority of staff working at the home are employed via a robust recruitment and selection process. This protects young people by preventing unsafe adults working at the home. On occasions where staff are employed through a recruitment agency their pre-employment checks lack sufficient detail. Specific gaps include their full employment history and verification of the reasons for leaving some previous employment. The impact of this is reduced by other recruitment processes in place. Staff understand the home's whistleblowing procedure and show a good awareness of safeguarding issues. This further protects young people.

The home is physically safe and free from avoidable hazards. This reduces the likelihood of accidents for both staff and young people.

Leadership and management

good

The home is managed by a suitably qualified, experienced Registered Manager who has been at the home since August 2012. The Registered Manager understands the home's strengths and weaknesses and there is a development plan in place. In addition, the Registered Manager monitors the performance of the home and the progress that young people make. Regular visits by an independent person also support the Registered Manager's review of the home.

The requirement made at the last inspection has been addressed. Improvements have been made to the kitchen and bathroom. This enhances these areas for both staff and young people. The recommendation made at the last inspection has also been met. Staff have worked closely with education providers, young people, and their social workers to support young people's education. This has improved outcomes for young people. These improvements further evidence the desire of the manager to better the service offered by the home.

Staff receive regular supervision and talk positively about the quality of this. This improves practice and supports staff to better care for young people.

Regular training is offered to staff who are positive about this. The effectiveness of the learning and development programme is not evaluated each year. This does not allow the Registered Manager to assess the quality of the programme or to develop it. Staff demonstrate sound knowledge in key areas which limits the impact this has. The Registered Manager keeps up to date with new practice developments and policies and ensures that these are shared with the staff team. This includes keeping up to date with different authorities protocols when young people go missing. This improves the service and the support young people receive.

The homes Statement of Purpose does not provide enough detail in some areas. Specifically in relation to the therapeutic support available to the home. In addition, revisions of the homes Statement of Purpose are not sent to HMCI, Ofsted in a timely way. Placing social workers, staff and young people understand the services offered by the home which limits the impact of this.

The home's admissions and discharges register does not show the young people's address on leaving the home. This has little direct impact on young people as staff were able to find the information recorded in other areas.

The Registered Manager takes action to chase up visits and information from social

workers or other professionals. Young people are supported to attend their review meetings and contribute to these. Young people who do not speak English are supported at these meetings by a translator. This ensures that all young people's views are heard.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.