

SC005042

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

This home is owned by a private company. It provides care for children with social and/or emotional difficulties. The children's home can accommodate up to 10 children, with a further two children accommodated in the satellite home.

The manager is not yet registered with Ofsted.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 15 June 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2022

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: 17 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/09/2019	Full	Good
30/05/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/07/2017	Full	Good
02/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress in the important areas of their lives. Children enjoy living in the home. During the inspection, one child said that she was 'living her best life'.

When children move into the home, they are well supported. For example, before moving in, children meet the staff and other children, choose paint colours for their new bedroom and pick a favourite meal for their first night. In addition, the manager undertakes an assessment as to whether children can be appropriately cared for. However, in one instance, the manager's assessment did not capture the decision-making about how staff would respond to children having similar behaviours. This did not impact on the well-being and safety of children.

Staff have developed trusting and positive relationships with children. The children's key-working sessions are creative and focused. For one child, staff have created a self-care book to help her identify strategies that make her feel relaxed and calm. Another child has been supported to write a CV and apply for jobs. Children benefit from this individualised support.

Children attend full-time education at the on-site school and are making good progress. In addition, informal learning sessions take place during house meetings to explore topics such as bullying, safe relationships and road safety. This support allows children to engage in informal and formal learning.

Staff encourage children to have fun and have new experiences. Children take part in a variety of activities, including going to the local park, youth club, football matches and roller skating. Where appropriate, staff observe children during activities to monitor responses in the community and ensure that children are supported. Activities encourage children to build friendships outside of the home and develop new interests.

Children are registered with local health services and attend routine appointments. Specialist mental health services are sought when required, and during the inspection, children explained the benefit of time spent with therapists. This means that children's physical and emotional health has improved.

Professionals comment positively on the care children receive. Staff communicate effectively with the important people involved in children's lives. One parent said that the staff have helped her build on her relationship with her son and that staff always go the extra mile.

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

Children say they feel safe living in this home. Staff understand the children's known risks and what actions they are expected to take to keep children safe. However, written risk assessments do not accurately reflect the strategies in place to protect children. This includes how staff manage the risks associated with children using mobile phones and when children spend independent time in the community. Despite this recording shortfall, the safety of children has not been compromised.

Since the last full inspection, there have been no episodes of children going missing from the home. Physical interventions are rare and only used when necessary to keep everyone safe. Following physical interventions, staff ensure that professionals are informed and that children complete debrief sessions. This supports children to learn alternative behaviours.

Positive behaviour is recognised. Children have incentive charts with mutually agreed goals. Children are provided with the opportunity to save for a special item, such as a new controller for their games console. In addition, children's individual achievements are celebrated. One child recently attended a music concert; this was a surprise from staff in recognition of her progress. This helps the children to understand the impact of their behaviour and reflect on how well they are doing.

The manager takes immediate action when children share sensitive information related to their experiences. When concerns have arisen, managers have completed effective investigations and worked well with the relevant professionals. These actions ensure that children feel safe living in the home.

Staff carry out regular health and safety checks. The manager has a location risk assessment, and this includes data about criminal activity in the local area and the views of external agencies. This ensures that children live in a safe environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by passionate and committed managers. A new manager has been appointed and is in the process of applying for registration with Ofsted. The new manager has a good awareness of the strengths and needs of the provision.

Staff morale in the home is good. The children receive care from a stable and consistent staff team. This means children experience consistency and have the opportunity to form meaningful relationships.

Staff speak highly of the support and guidance that they receive. Supervision and appraisals are completed regularly, and they are used to develop and improve practice. The management team seeks the views of the children through the use of questionnaires to inform staff development. Consequently, managers have created an environment where children enjoy living and staff enjoy coming to work.

All staff have completed mandatory training, and on occasions, the manager has completed workshops during team meetings to further enhance staff development. However, the staff have not completed training to meet the specific needs of the children. For example, one child has dyspraxia, and no training has taken place. This may impact the care provided to children. During the inspection, the manager scheduled training to rectify this shortfall.

There are times when managers have not ensured that their concerns are escalated within reasonable timescales. For example, when a local authority has not met the agreed actions following a care planning meeting, the manager has failed to escalate the concerns. While this has not had any serious consequences so far, it has the potential to do so.

The manager has not updated the home's statement of purpose to reflect the changes to the therapeutic support offered to children. This shortfall prevents the regulator, professionals and loved ones from having clear and up-to-date information about the care provided in the home.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c)) This specifically relates to ensuring that there is a clear and effective escalation plan in place to ensure that children's needs are met in accordance with plans.	25 March 2022
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)) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that the children's risk assessments are clear.	25 March 2022
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—	25 March 2022

ensure that staff have the experiences, qualifications, and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that all staff complete child-specific training.	
The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (5)) This specifically relates to the statement of purpose being up to date with the care that is provided in the home.	25 March 2022

Recommendation

- The registered provider should ensure that the manager works closely with the placing authority to understand the child's relationship history and the impact that the child's arrival may have on the group living in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.3)

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: SC005042

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

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

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

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Justin Pomelli

Inspectors

Sophie Hills, Social Care Inspector

Nick Bennison, Social Care Inspector

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