

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC008268
Inspector	Michelle Spruce
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	Martin Lewis Russell
Date of last inspection	24/02/2014

Inspection date	03/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This is a good service with outstanding features. The excellent, well-planned care is a key strength in improving outcomes for young people. The manager is dedicated and fully supported by a caring staff team.

The relationships young people have with staff are trusting and respectful. Young people speak highly of the staff and about the quality of care they receive. The views of young people are captured through consultation that enhances the running of the home.

Young people are safe and say they are safe in a home that protects them from harm and provides them with the stability they need to keep them safe.

The management is effective and leaders strive to improve, develop and drive forward the service to maximise its potential. Regular monitoring secures improvement and development plans assist the continuation. There is a shortfall to the service and one requirement has been made.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. It is part of a large, private organisation operating a number of children's homes.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/02/2014	Interim	good progress
03/12/2013	Full	good
03/09/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress
04/05/2012	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
30 (2001)	ensure any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Regulation 30(1))	31/01/2015

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people are happy living in the home. They know why they are in care and as a result their confidence has grown. For example, going to the local shop alone for one young person has been a big success. A young person said, 'This is the best home I have ever lived in'. This means young people thrive and continue to make progress.

Young people make good progress in their education considering their starting point. Regardless of the difficulties and barriers young people face they continue to embrace learning opportunities. A young person said, 'I am happy at school, I like Maths'. As a result, young people make progress at a pace individual to their ability and continue to achieve educational outcomes.

The health needs of young people are met. They have a range of services that provide access to meet their social, emotional, physical and psychological well-being. As a result of direct access to health services, young people show a reduction in risk taking behaviour and their emotional health improves. For example, drug use has reduced significantly; this has been a big improvement for some young people.

Young people remain in contact with friends, family and those who are important to them. As a result, relationships improve and family bonds are strengthened. A young person said, 'I plan to stay at my mom's for Christmas; our relationship is better'.

Young people are aware that moving on from the home is part of the plan. They make progress in developing skills that will help them live independently. Such as household chores, managing money, shopping for food, and cooking skills. The pace in which they begin to prepare for leaving care is individual to their age and ability. This ensures a smooth transition takes place and that young people are ready and prepared. A young person said, 'I want to stay here then move into my own flat'.

Quality of care

outstanding

Staff are excellent role models who provide high quality care to vulnerable young people. As a result, young people form strong attachments to the staff and develop confidence and trust in them. This helps them develop into mature young adults.

Staff are highly skilled and knowledgeable about the needs of young people because care planning is clear, robust and regularly updated. Young people are centrally and constantly involved in planning their care. Records clearly identify that consultation takes place to gain their views and involve young people in shaping the care they receive.

Young people enjoy a range of activities that they choose to keep them fit and active. Staff encourage them to engage in hobbies and activities that are stimulating, socially interactive and tailored to their individual needs, age and ability. As a result, young people's confidence and health and well-being improve.

Excellent partnership working with external professionals is a key strength in effective care planning. Staff goes above and beyond to ensure joint working gets the best results for young people. For example, working with the Youth Offending team, police and mental health services has seen a reduction in offending and risk taking behaviour. Staff do not give up when young people face barriers to learning. They work in partnership and look to find alternatives. This helps young people to get the best out of their time at the home and makes them feel valued and important.

The home is well presented, ideally located and provides a relaxed and welcoming environment for young people. This makes the house feel like a home and staff provides the nurture young people require to develop them socially and emotionally.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people say they feel safe in the home. They confirm it is a nice place to live, the area is safe and they take part in regular fire drills. This means they are safe and protected from harm.

Staff are trained and knowledgeable in safeguarding and child protection. They work in partnership with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board in bringing any concerns to their attention. Staff know and understand the channels in reporting any child protection concerns. As a result, young people are protected from abuse.

Staff are proactive in protecting and safeguarding young people against the risk of harm. They know and understand their vulnerabilities and have clear risk management plans to support them. A staff member said, 'I think they are safe; behaviour has improved and they are protected; criminal activity is no longer an issue. They choose to come home and want to be here'. As a result, staff manage behaviour well and incidents are reducing. A young person said, 'I used to get really angry; I have calmed down now; staff notice when I get angry and tell me to calm down; this helps me'.

The use of physical intervention has been used once since the last full inspection in December 2013. This measure is only used as a last resort and is to safeguard and protect the young people or others from the risk of injury or harm. Staff are trained in de-escalating behaviour and physical intervention. This ensures behaviour is managed in proportion to the behaviour, is appropriate and only used when absolutely necessary. This keeps young people safe.

Staff are safely recruited. The process ensures that potential candidates are vetted and any checks completed are cleared before starting work with young people. This protects vulnerable young people from the risk of harm from unsuitable candidates having access to them.

Regular monitoring of the home is completed in line with health and safety requirements. Routine fire drills and equipment tests further ensure the home is safe and protected against the risk of fire. This maintains a safe place for everyone to live, work and visit.

Leadership and management

good

The home benefits from a Registered Manager who holds a NVQ level 3 in Child Care and is working towards the level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management.

The Registered Manager is supported by a stable and committed staff team. The team are a valuable asset in delivering quality care and improving outcomes for young people. Staff receive training, support and regular supervision to maximise their skills and learning potential to assist them in the delivery of care.

A person not in day-to-day charge of the home monitors the home monthly and provides a report to the manager. The manager reviews the quality of care by evaluating the feedback provided. This identifies improvement to be made where shortfalls occur. Improvement is tracked through effective monitoring that includes consultation with young people, staff and others. Feedback forms are sent out externally to gain the views about the service. Staff said, 'We know how well we are doing by gaining feedback through meetings with external professionals'.

Young people's records are stored safely and sensitive information is shared on a need to know basis. This keeps confidential data safe.

Young people thrive and placements remain stable. Life chances have improved because of the positive outcomes achieved from when they moved into and out of the home. Surveys responses received to Ofsted about the home confirm young people succeed as a result of the quality of care provided.

The manager takes action to notify Ofsted when significant events occur. Sometimes notifications are delayed in reaching Ofsted. This delays information required to be shared.

Complaints are addressed in a timely manner and managed well. All complaints are taken seriously and are investigated in a fair and sensitive manner.

The manager has addressed the requirement and recommendations made at the last inspection. The Statement of Purpose now includes details of the organisational

structure which includes clear arrangements for the supervision of the manager. Additionally, when the manager is considering new placements he uses the Statement of Purpose to check the suitability along with an impact risk assessment before deciding if an individual needs can be met. When young people leave the service the manager makes a conscious effort to gain the views about the service. This helps to evaluate how well the home is doing and how it can improve.

There is a development plan in place that staff have contributed to. This working document is aimed at achieving specific targets and is regularly reviewed against them to evaluate performance.

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.