

SC008268

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 private company owns this home. The home offers care and accommodation for up to two young people who have experienced childhood instability, resulting in trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 17 June 2013. He holds a level 5 qualification in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 February 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 9 May 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/05/2018	Full	Good
27/06/2017	Full	Good
18/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/07/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Since the last inspection, two young people have left the home and one has moved in. Young people's experiences and progress are mixed. One young person's transition was well planned, and he has settled well in his new home. While living at the home, he made good progress in education and developed his personal care and independence skills. However, another young person recently left the home due to their escalating risk-taking behaviours that were not managed well by staff. The one young person currently living in the home has settled well and formed strong relationships with staff.

The inspection found that the registered manager and staff did not take necessary steps to safeguard a young person. These serious shortfalls meant that this young person was not protected from harm.

One young person had ongoing mental-health needs. On occasions, he expressed wishes to self-harm or commit suicide. Despite this, staff failed to escalate their concern about the young person's outstanding mental health assessment. This was a missed opportunity to provide him with specialist care in line with his needs.

Staff provided another young person with good-quality support. For example, he received support from a counselling service to help him address a legacy of childhood neglect. In addition, staff used individualised approaches to help the young person manage a long-term memory condition. As a result, he made good progress from his starting point.

Staff support young people to participate in their care. For example, regular meetings and key-work sessions provide them with opportunities to plan activities and set targets. This encourages young people to take ownership of their care.

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

Risk assessments do not contain sufficient detail or guidance for staff to manage risk. As a result, the risks that young people pose to themselves and others are not fully acted on.

One young person had a number of vulnerabilities and associated risk factors. These included concerns about his mental health, substance misuse, exploitation and unhealthy and harmful relationship dynamics. The young person's risk-taking behaviour escalated, and he went missing from the home on several occasions. Despite these risks, staff responses to manage risk were not proportionate and were ineffective. For example, staff searches were minimal when the young person went missing. This meant that he was exposed to high levels of risk and is the subject of a criminal investigation.

The registered manager's ineffective and poorly planned approach placed the young person at risk of harm. For example, only one member of staff was on shift to provide care to two young people from 10pm until the next morning. As a result, insufficient staff resources at night severely restricted their ability to continue searching for the young person and respond to issues during the night.

Staff did not support the young person to fully understand the risks he was exposed to and how to keep himself safe. Key-work sessions were not targeted and in line with the young person's escalating risks. For example, there was no exploration of his sexual health or healthy relationship dynamics. This was a missed opportunity to help the young person to understand the risks he was exposed to and keep safe.

Despite these serious shortfalls, staff did demonstrate some effective safeguarding practice. For example, during previous incidents they provided proactive and joined-up care to manage a young person's risk-taking behaviour. However, inconsistent responses to risk management do not fully protect young people and others from the risk of harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager missed opportunities to keep young people safe. For example, he did not work effectively with partner agencies to share key safeguarding information and agree plans to manage risk. As a result, staff responses to risk were neither co-ordinated nor effective. Unfortunately, a young person is now facing a serious allegation following a recent incident.

The registered manager has monitoring systems in place. However, while these identify some strengths and areas to develop, their overall impact is variable. For example, the registered manager did not identify and respond to a young person's escalating risks. This lack of oversight was a missed opportunity to review serious incidents, identify lessons learned and ensure that care was responsive to young people's needs.

Senior leaders do not provide the necessary oversight of staff practice. This is a missed opportunity to identify and address significant shortfalls in staff safeguarding practice. As a result, young people are placed at risk.

The experienced and stable staff team has a good range of experience and skills. They are committed to young people and keen for them to make progress. Staff provide young people with nurture and encouragement. However, this is undermined by poorly thought-out responses when young people's risks escalate. This means that young people's care experiences are inconsistent and do not fully meet their needs.

The registered manager does not always send notifications of significant events to the appropriate agencies. As a result, external agencies cannot provide oversight and guidance to ensure that the staff learn from events.

Overall, young people's internal plans are detailed and fully reflect their needs. However, some do not fully capture their progress. The registered manager has plans to address this shortfall.

Staff benefit from regular supervision and training. Regular team meetings provide staff with opportunities to discuss young people's progress and examine their practice. Staff feel supported by managers and their peers. However, training courses and opportunities to reflect on practice are not used effectively to develop staff's learning.

The home has been extensively redeveloped and refurbished since the last inspection. A new spacious lounge provides young people and staff with an additional space to relax and communicate. The environment is a homely and inviting place for young people.

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; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (c)(d))	17/04/2020
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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;	17/04/2020

take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(b))*	
If the registered provider is a partnership, the partnership must ensure that one of the partners undertakes such continuing professional development as is necessary to ensure that the partner has the skills needed for carrying on the home. (Regulation 29 (3)) In particular, senior leaders should keep abreast of learning and development to ensure that care provided at the home is responsive to need and lessons are learned.	17/04/2020
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	17/04/2020

* This requirement is subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
In particular, ensure that internal plans fully reflect the progress of each young person.

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: SC008268

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Martin Russell

Inspector

Gareth Leckey, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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