

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC008270
Inspector	Carole Moore
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	Ann Williams
Date of last inspection	08/01/2014

Inspection date	24/10/2014
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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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Overall this home provides a good quality of care that takes into account the individual needs of young people. Staff are experienced and skilled and work hard to promote a positive nurturing atmosphere in the home. The Registered Manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home, so enabling her and the staff to continue to strive for further improvement.

Young people are positive about this home and feel secure in their placements as a result of the structure and boundaries that are in place. The strength of relationships between young people and staff contribute to their feeling of being safe. Staff know the young people well and understand their individual care needs.

Young people are supported well in coming to terms with their background and why they are currently living in this children's home. They are helped to understand their past experiences and grow in confidence to make positive changes in their lives. The staff ensure that contact is maintained with family and friends who are important to young people. This home works closely with families and keeps them well informed.

There were no breaches to the regulations and no recommendations made.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The setting is a family-sized home. Care is provided for two young people of either sex who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. A private company owns and operates this setting.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
02/10/2013	Full	adequate
05/02/2013	Interim	good progress
28/11/2012	Full	outstanding

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people are making good progress in this home. They are developing emotional resilience through regular discussions in one-to-one sessions with staff and the young people's meetings. They are increasingly, developing their confidence, self-esteem and are able to voice their views regarding issues affecting their lives. Young people enjoy good relationships with staff and get on well with them. They feel that they are listened to and are safe and secure. This results in young people feeling secure enough to express their wishes, and worries in constructive ways. This includes the ability to talk through problems reasonably, negotiate and find acceptable solutions.

Young people are fully aware of the ways in which they can raise any issues or concerns about their care. This includes talking to staff, managers or their social workers and there is also a suggestions box which they can use if they so wish.

Young people enjoy their leisure time. Activities are highly individualised and good use is made of community resources to allow young people to have as many experiences as possible. Young people's activity plans are age appropriate and responsive to their likes and dislikes. Both young people are using their half term to have a holiday with friends and or family. Within the home environment, young people systematically develop their confidence by having access to a variety of resources and opportunities to share their leisure time with staff.

Young people lead healthy lifestyles. They are active and enjoy activities and trips that often involve exercise. They attend medical appointments and through the support of staff have good awareness of healthy eating and good personal hygiene. Their health information is age appropriate and is enabling them to begin to make informed personal decisions about their own health and well-being.

Young people play an active role around the home and are responsible for some small daily chores. Staff help them understand the benefits of having such skills in the future. They are learning basic budgeting skills through shopping trips with staff. As a result young people are learning valuable life skills but in a social and relaxed way.

Young people are supported to attend school and college. Achievements are celebrated to recognise individual progress, this has included more recently success in attaining GCSE results and in securing places at a local college.

Quality of care **good**

The quality of care provided at the home is good. This is achieved through a committed staff team who have a thorough awareness of the differing needs of the young people and how to respond to their complex needs. Placement plans are informative and contain clear information for any new staff. A high level of detail is included within these plans and they clearly show a wide range of information about how the young person should be cared for. Placement plans link up to other plans, such as education and health plans, to ensure a continuity of care is achieved across the provision. Plans are updated on a regular basis to ensure that the correct information is in place. There is a good tracking tool that enables staff to measure their overall progress.

Staff actively promote young people's education, learning and development. Staff ensure that the daily routine supports young people's participation in education and school attendance. Young people have easy access to books, computer, board games and other educational resources. Staff have good links with local education services and work effectively to support and further improve educational outcomes for young people living at the home.

The small size of the home allows staff the opportunity to consult with young people informally on a daily basis. Regular young people's meetings also allow young people the opportunity to express their views about the running of the home. Young people regularly contribute to menu planning, changes to the décor of the home and to planning their activities. Young people are able to personalise their own bedrooms and photographs of young people are on display in the home. This helps to ensure that young people feel part of the home and that their views are important.

The quality of care provided in this home is having a positive impact on young people's development and progress. The staff team build strong relationships with all professionals, working effectively in partnership with them and young people's families. This means young people receive the right support tailored to meet their individual needs. Stakeholders speak positively about the care and support that young people receive, for example: ' Pretty impressive on how they have managed him.' 'Partnership working is great.'

Young people are encouraged to keep good levels of contact with family and friends. All young people's contact arrangements are fully detailed and agreed in their care plans. The safety of young people and their welfare is always promoted. Young people benefit from direct face-to-face visits and telephone calls as well as letters. Extending contact to include a short holiday with past carers and family members is a good way to further promote good quality contact. As a result, this helps to maintain continuity of all relationships in young people's lives in order to maintain their identity.

Young people are supported by staff who are committed to promoting equality and diversity. Staff have a good understanding of the individuality, social, cultural and religious backgrounds of young people. Some young people enjoy activities which

reflect their own interests and talents. For example: attending youth clubs and church events, also staff and young people go on regular outings.

Young people live in a homely and comfortable environment that is decorated and furnished to a good standard. There is also a programme of ongoing maintenance within the home.

Keeping children and young people safe good

The home provides a safe environment where there are clear behavioural boundaries combined with a warm, nurturing approach which helps young people feel secure. Staff promote positive behaviour through effective communication with a clear expectation on young people about their behaviour. They consistently apply rewards and praise for positive behaviour. Young people understand the rules of the home and they feel that the staff are very fair and reasonable when it comes to helping them with their behaviour. Young people are rewarded for good behaviour as well as being sanctioned when their behaviour falls below what is expected. Discussions about what is and is not acceptable are frequent and rewards are given for good progress and adhering to their weekly programme.

Young people say that they feel safe in this home. Staff receive safeguarding training as part of their induction to the home and this is regularly updated. This ensures that they are confident in the procedure to follow should any concerns arise. The organisation has a number of policies and procedures designed to safeguard young people and these receive regular review. Staff prioritise the welfare of young people in their care. A range of individualised risk assessments are in place that ensure that due consideration is given to the potential for harm to the young person if the situation were to arise. These are subject to regular review and receive update following any incident. This ensures that the level of risk is proportionate to the young person's current presentation and that undue restrictions are not placed on young people.

This organisation adopts a robust procedure to employ new staff following safer recruitment practices. This ensures that young people are cared for by adults who have been checked for suitability to work with this vulnerable group.

Young people live in an environment that is physically safe. Regular safety checks are undertaken in the home and it is appropriately secure. Regular fire drills also ensure that young people and staff are familiar with the actions to take in the event of an emergency. Young people also have the opportunity to complete training for fire safety awareness, this contributes to their life skills and preparation for independence.

Leadership and management

good

Young people live in a home that is efficiently managed. The Registered Manager is very experienced, skilled and qualified and has been managing homes within the company for over 12 years. The home meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose and it has been reviewed in line with the regulations. The Registered Manager has also addressed both recommendations that were raised at the last interim inspection in January 2014.

There are sufficient numbers of staff on duty at all times to care for young people. All staff are suitably qualified with a new member of the team commencing his induction period. The team have worked together for some time and this consistently benefits the young people.

There is an independent Regulation 33 visitor who is experienced, thorough and well prepared to challenge. The manager also undertakes her own regular monitoring and the Regulation 34 reports are sent into Ofsted at the required intervals. The manager has a clear development plan in place which is a working document shared with all staff and young people. It highlights the progress she wishes to make over the coming 12 months.

Team meetings also take place regularly, which allows the whole staff team to reflect on young people's progress and how best to support them. It also enables all the staff to discuss the running of the home and to look at ways to improve the service they offer.

The organisation pro-actively supports staff. A range of training opportunities are available. Staff display confidence in training being identified if they were struggling to meet the needs of a young person. Staff also receive regular staff supervision and appraisal and appraisals takes into account any views of the young people. These practices ensure that young people are cared for by staff who have the necessary skills and support to deliver a good standard of care.

The Registered Manager and provider organisation have a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for improvement. The manager carries out regular checks on key areas of the home's operation to ensure young people's needs are being met. In addition, information is provided in progress reports and sent to the placing authority social workers. Young people are regularly canvassed for their views about the home and their experiences of being in care.

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.