

SC008270

Registered provider: Care Today

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to two young people who have experienced adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and presenting complex behaviours.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in April 2016 and is suitably qualified. No young people have moved into or out of the home since the last inspection.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 27 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/02/2019	Full	Outstanding
18/07/2017	Full	Good
08/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/09/2016	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 13.1, page 61)
- Staff must help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home's support and, where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 3.27, page 17)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people flourish as a direct result of the trusting and respectful relationships they have with the staff.

Young people live in a highly nurturing environment that feels like their home. Mealtimes are a social occasion and an opportunity for the young people and the staff to sit down together and reflect on the day. One young person told the inspector that he likes living at the home and the best thing about it is the staff.

Staff understand the importance of young people being able to stay in touch with their families. Staff provide excellent support to help young people to maintain and develop these family relationships. When appropriate, staff work closely with social workers to enable young people to have safe overnight visits to family members. These restored relationships have a positive impact on young people's progress.

When the time is right, young people are consulted about their plans to move on from the home. When the plan is for young people to return to live with their families, the registered manager and staff work closely with the family and young person to enable this to happen. This includes supporting parents to find a suitable home and providing extra food for the family when their child stays overnight. This high level of support has enabled one young person to have his wish to return home to his family fulfilled.

Managers and staff work closely with teachers to ensure that young people are given every opportunity to succeed and to fulfil their educational potential. When young people display signs of disengagement or difficulties emerge, the registered manager and staff

respond quickly and take whatever action is needed to prevent any disruption or breakdown in the placement. As a result of their intervention, young people quickly get back on track and achieve academic success.

Staff understand the emotional impact on young people of early childhood abuse and neglect. They are strong advocates for young people and do all they can to ensure that they have the emotional support they need. This includes ensuring that young people have prompt access to specialist services.

Staff support young people to develop their independence. On some occasions, staff are slow to identify when young people are struggling with some aspects of their life skills, such as personal hygiene. This means that staff miss opportunities to support young people to increase their independence skills at their own pace.

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

Staff have an excellent understanding of the importance of safeguarding and the need to remain vigilant to help young people to stay safe. Staff ensure that well-informed risk assessments help to identify situations and behaviours that may increase the risks young people face. Assessments also provide staff with guidance on what actions they may need to take to reduce and manage risk. Staff support young people to take age-appropriate risks as part of developing skills in independent living. As a result, young people are supported to develop the essential skills they need to make safe decisions.

When young people go missing from the home, staff follow missing-from-care protocols effectively. Staff use a wide range of methods to stay in touch with young people and search all known places where young people may have gone. When young people return home, they receive a warm welcome. This is followed by a discussion about why they went missing from the home. This results in staff having a greater understanding of why young people go missing, which informs future planning and as a result, incidents of going missing reduce and risks are better managed.

When young people show early signs of beginning to make associations with gangs, the staff are quick to take action. Staff get in touch with key professionals such as the police, social workers and the youth offending service without delay. Together, they work to help young people understand and avoid the risks of becoming involved with gangs. This proactive partnership work has helped to prevent young people being at risk of exploitation and/or becoming criminalised.

Behaviour management in the home is based on reward and praise for positive behaviour. Staff rarely use sanctions. Instead, they deal with negative behaviour by talking with young people and encouraging them to think about what they do, supporting them with strategies that offer the possibility of changing their responses and behaviours. Staff are highly skilled at using de-escalation techniques and as a result, physical intervention has not been used in the home for over eight years.

Young people live in a well-maintained and welcoming home. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks and quickly address any concerns. Staff use their positive relationship with the police to get regular updates about emerging risks in the local area.

New staff are safely recruited in the vast majority of cases. On one occasion, the manager failed to demonstrate sufficient professional curiosity about historical information that became available during a new member of staff's Disclosure and Barring Service check. This represents a missed opportunity for the manager to satisfy herself about the person's suitability to work with children. However, once this information was brought to the manager's attention, immediate action was taken to ensure the person's suitability to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has an in-depth understanding of the young people living in the home and is a strong advocate for them. For example, the manager advocated for one young person's college placement to be changed because his college was too large, and he felt overwhelmed. This enabled the young person to continue his education and pursue his aspirations for the future.

One-to-one staffing ensures that each young person receives bespoke individualised support. Social workers are extremely positive about the staff and how they work in close partnership with them. This ensures that the plans and targets made by placing authorities are adhered to and regularly reviewed.

Staff receive regular high-quality supervision and an annual appraisal. The manager uses these meetings to challenge staff practice and to consider their training needs.

New staff benefit from a well-structured induction programme which includes twice-monthly supervision and an end-of-induction appraisal. This means that new staff have many opportunities to develop their practice.

The home is fully staffed, and staff retention is excellent. Most of the staff have achieved their level 3 diploma in residential childcare.

Staff receive a range of training that reflects the complex needs of the young people. This is supported by staff receiving regular core skills training. In addition, the manager accesses current research to help her to inform staff practice.

The manager uses effective management information systems to support her to make improvements to the quality of care that young people receive. She closely assesses young people's day-to-day experiences and evaluates their progress from their starting points. This means that prompt identification of patterns in young people's behaviours leads to the right support and guidance being put in place at the point of need.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC008270

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Kyra Knight

Inspector

Karen Gillingwater, social care inspector

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