

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC008271
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	Geoffrey Peck
Date of last inspection	10/03/2014

Inspection date	07/11/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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There were no young people accommodated at the time of the inspection.

Young people reported that they did feel safe while living at the home. The anti-social behaviour and increased levels of missing from home however has placed young people at risk when outside of the home and broken down good community relationships.

The key strengths lie within the manager and staff team. They work in partnership with external services and continue to work towards improving the quality of care and outcomes for young people.

Relationships are generally good between staff and young people. Young people share their views and contribute to the care they receive and to the home they live in.

The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the service. There are some shortfalls identified and as a result, three requirements and one recommendation have been made.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to two young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. A private company owns and operates the setting.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
05/11/2013	Full	good
12/02/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
21/11/2012	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
4 (2001)	ensure the home's statement of purpose includes all those matters listed in schedule 1. In relation to a description of how the children's home promotes appropriate role models of both sexes (Regulation 4(1) Schedule 1(22))	31/01/2015
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include, the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure (Regulation 17B(3)(f))	31/01/2015
2000	ensure that children's liberty is not restricted in the children's home. It is unacceptable for a home that	31/01/2015

	is not approved by the Secretary of State to lock a child in for the purpose of detention. Volume 5 2.107	
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure a written or electronic record is kept by the home detailing the time, date and length of each supervision (NMS 19.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people know and understand the importance of maintaining a healthy life style. They attend routine health appointments that keep them fit and well. Some young people are old enough to independently seek guidance in relation to their sexual health. This means young people take responsibility for keeping fit and well.

Some young people's education has been affected by their behaviour. As a result, alternative education placements have been provided. This gives young people the opportunity to continue to learn in an environment that meets their needs. A social worker commented, she was pleased with the care and support provided to young people, and said, 'Her education is back on track'.

Young people enjoy contact with people who are significant in their lives. A parent confirmed she had regular contact with her daughter. Regular contact for some young people strengthens family bonds and assists them to return home to live with family. As a result, family ties and bonds remain strong.

Some young people leave care ready for adult life and go on to semi-independent living. Others continue to improve their life skills in readiness for leaving care. Young people prepare for moving on at a pace that is individual to them. This ensures that when they leave care they are confident and prepared for adult life. The recorded view of a former resident said, 'Thanks to the team and the manager for helping me get to where I wanted to go'.

Quality of care **adequate**

Staff are active in helping young people voice their views. Records of young people's meetings capture views about food, activities, targets, behaviour, complaints and bullying. Young people sign the log book to show they have attended. They are given the opportunity to chair meetings and complete the minutes. This gives ownership and develops confidence. Staff negotiates alternative options where they are unable to meet the wishes of young people. This means solutions are found by compromising.

Staff help young people to raise their concerns in confidence. They provide complaint forms and stamped addressed envelopes along with the young people's guide informing them about the complaints procedure. This enables them to independently express their views and concerns. Young people have also used independent advocates to speak up for them. This has resolved matters that young people have been unhappy about and ensures complaints are dealt with appropriately.

Young people's social needs are met through a range of age appropriate activities. They are encouraged by staff to choose activities that will give them the best interaction and enjoyment. For example, roller disco, feeding the ducks and going to the zoo are a few of the choices young people made. This keeps young people fit and strengthens their social skills.

Some young people's behaviour has impacted on community relationships. The manager and staff team work closely with the local police, young people and neighbours to re-enforce positive social interaction. This has proved difficult at times, but relationships are now beginning to improve and strengthen again. The manager continues to communicate with the community and make himself available when needed to address issues. He takes action and listens to his neighbours. This keeps channels of communication open and helps to raise issues of concern. Relationships between staff and young people are generally good. A staff member said, 'We had a positive relationship.'

Staff promote the educational needs of young people. They work in partnership with education staff to provide the most appropriate learning opportunities that meet their individual needs. A staff member said, 'She used to go to mainstream school; but due to violence moved to another school; she really liked it and settled well'. Where other young people struggle to engage or attend education, staff work closely to provide learning materials and support. The manager confirmed that learning was encouraged by promoting life skills such as budgeting, cooking, and reading. This helps young people to continue to learn regardless of the barriers they face. Following a young person's return home a parent said, 'I still have to push her education; staff still check to see how she is doing; this is the first time someone has done this since her being in the care system'.

Young people's health needs are met. A parent said, 'She had chest pains; staff took her straight to hospital and kept me up to date'. This means young people's health needs are met. Well-balanced and nutritious meals provide young people with healthy meal options.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Survey responses received; along with monthly monitoring reports, demonstrate that young people who previously lived at the home did feel safe. A young person said, 'I always feel safe in the home'.

Staff promote positive behaviour and offer praise and rewards to re-enforce what is acceptable. Sanctions remove privileges as a result of poor behaviour. Staff are trained in the use of physical intervention and records show an increase in its use. Records do not routinely record the effectiveness or the consequence of physical intervention. This means staff continue to use physical intervention without fully

evaluating the effectiveness of this approach. This does not help young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour.

Episodes of missing from home have significantly increased as a result of placement changes and peer influence. Where some young people are at risk of going missing from home, staff have locked doors, and blocked exits. This has escalated the behaviour of young people, which has resulted in staff using physical intervention to protect themselves or the young person from harm. On occasion the police have been called as a result of the harm caused to staff. This action by staff to safeguard against young people going missing restricts the liberty of young people, and in this situation has placed the young people at risk of being criminalised through their aggression towards staff.

Staff are vigilant and effective in working with the police and try to understand the triggers to going missing. The manager and staff work closely with relevant agencies to keep young people safe. A police officer said, 'We work closely'. This helps young people to return home safely.

Some young people that presented considerable risks, and could no longer be safeguarded due to their presenting behaviour, were found alternative placements more suitable to meet their needs.

Staff are fully vetted before they can work with young people. The recruitment is thorough. New staff are currently being sought for the home. Visitors to the home are checked on arrival. This validates who they are and keeps young people safe.

Leadership and management

adequate

The management arrangements for the service have changed since the last inspection. There is a new Registered Manager who has been in post since June 2014. He is qualified to level NVQ 4 Leadership and management. The home at the time of inspection had no children on roll.

The requirement from the last inspection has not been fully met. The Statement of Purpose has been updated, but does not outline how the home will promote appropriate role models of both sexes while staff are of one sex. There are amendments that now identify the arrangements for the professional supervision of the manager and therapists.

There is a development plan in place that identifies how the home will continue to operate. It is a working document developed in consultation with staff and young people. As a result, areas for improvement are developed.

The manager tracks improvement and knows the strengths and weaknesses of the

service. For example, the successful transition of young people into independent living or return home demonstrates the capacity for the service to continue to improve. Where there are risks to young people placed, the manager works jointly with placing authorities and the police to find alternative, more appropriate placements. This ensures that young people continue to receive the appropriate quality of care.

The quality of care has not been sufficiently evaluated by the manager during the Schedule 6 monitoring. For example, records of physical intervention identify inappropriate use of restraint. This means the monitoring of behaviour is weak because breaches in staff practice are not identified and acted on by the manager to safeguard young people.

Monthly monitoring is completed by the manager and the independent visitor. Young people are consulted with during visits. Reports are sent to Ofsted in line with guidance.

Staff receive regular supervision, training and appraisals. The record is incomplete in recording all required information, for example the record of supervision does not routinely record the time supervision takes place. All notifications of significant events are sent on time to the relevant authorities. This ensures that any action necessary is taken.

The home is well looked after and has recently been re-decorated. The furniture and soft furnishings are tasteful and make the house feel like home. This is in readiness for the admission of future young people. All health and safety requirements are met. This keeps all who live, work and visit the home safe.

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.