

Children's homes – interim inspection

Inspection date	25/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC008271
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	The Partnership of Care Today Children's Services
Registered person address	Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 6LR

Responsible individual	Vivien Snape
Registered manager	Post Vacant
Inspector	David Morgan

Inspection date	25/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged requires improvement at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. The last inspection found that the service required improvement. There is now a new manager overseeing the home who has substantial managerial experience in good and outstanding services within the company. He has addressed the issues raised at the last inspection. As a result, the standard of presentation of the property itself is now much higher. Children have contributed to the pleasant décor, ornaments and even to the building of a new cupboard to house the fridge and freezer. Plans are in place with the landlord to replace the windows and external doors, and to resurface the drive. Also, there is now much closer control of new admissions. For example, a new child has recently arrived who is a good match for the existing child. He experienced a planned admission that gave him time to appraise the home, and gave the manager the time to find out enough about him. The improved admission procedures now take into account the other children's home across the road, too. However, the children's own records do not record for them how the manager reached these important decisions. Children enjoy a wide range of activities based around their regular attendance in formal education. One child spoke favourably about a recent holiday to Scotland. He also takes responsibility for keeping tropical fish, and he baked a cake for everyone on the day of the inspection. The programme of refurbishment has improved the safety of children and addressed the issues raised at the last inspection. The new locks on external doors allow easy exit in the event of an emergency and suitable bedroom window retainers are in place to prevent them opening too far. Very few safety issues have arisen since the last inspection. The manager liaises promptly with other professionals in the event of a concern arising. The membership of the staff team has changed since the last inspection and the day-to-day management of the team is much better than before. This is evident in the records of staff supervision meetings, as well as the smooth operation of the	

service. As a result, staff ensure that children have full timetables, children engage well with the team and staff address their concerns without incident. Children feel safe because of the structure and therefore get as much as possible from their placements at this home. They confirm in writing and verbally that they are happy here and their family members agree with this. The team is slightly under-resourced at present, but recruitment is underway. This is not having an adverse effect on the children.

The company operates a similar home across the road. The close proximity of the homes has a direct impact on their staffing and management arrangements, and the matching of new children. The previous inspections of both homes found shortfalls in these areas. The new manager has responsibility for both services, to ensure that they both work collaboratively in the future. His registration with Ofsted is underway.

Independent monitoring of the service occurs every month. However, some of the comments in the reports are pre-populated, including health and safety, children's activities and staff recruitment records. This means that rather than assessing these areas, the authors imply or speculate that the outcomes are satisfactory. This is poor practice and misleads readers. In addition, it does not contribute sufficiently to its main purpose, which is to help the organisation itself to identify shortfalls, such as those that occurred here recently. The manager has a clear plan for the improvement of the service. He is implementing this plan at a pace that ensures effectiveness at each stage.

Information about this children's home

A large provider of children's services operates this two-bedded home. Its registration allows it to accept children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is located close to another home that is operated by the same company, which has the same manager.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/07/2015	CH – Full	Requires improvement
12/02/2015	CH – Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/11/2014	CH – Full	Adequate
10/03/2014	CH – Interim	Satisfactory progress

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13 The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must: (2)(h) 'use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.' This is with regard to ensuring that the findings of Regulation 44 reports are not pre-populated.	31/03/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the registered person only accepts placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. This is with regard to showing such decision-making in children's records. (Guide to the Quality Care Standards, page 56, paragraph 11.4)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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