

SC008486

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

This children's home is one of a number of homes run by a partnership. It is registered to provide care for up to six children. At the time of the inspection, four children were living in the home. Three of them spoke to the inspector about their experiences living in the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2017.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 January 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 12 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/09/2019	Full	Outstanding
09/01/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
17/04/2018	Full	Good
01/11/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children say that they like living in the home. They are supported to develop positive, trusting relationships with staff who understand them. These relationships underpin the progress they make in all areas of their lives. One child told the inspector, 'It's amazing. The staff are brilliant and I'm happier than I've ever been.'

Staff have a real can-do attitude towards supporting children to fulfill their potential. They work consistently to meet children's individual needs. Children are encouraged to pursue their interests and join local sports clubs. Through activities such as rugby and football, children are able to further develop strategies to manage their emotions and increase their confidence and self-esteem. Children's achievements are celebrated. Photographs reflecting their successes are proudly displayed throughout the home.

Children are listened to. They are able to talk to staff about things that are important to them. Their cultural heritage and identities are promoted. Children have opportunities to learn about their history and plans are in place to take a child to visit their country of birth. Children know how to complain and any concerns they raise are swiftly addressed.

Challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic have been well managed in the home. Robust hygiene practices are in place, and children are well supported during periods of isolation and illness.

The team works creatively with children and their families to overcome barriers and strengthen their relationships. They provide opportunities for them to have positive experiences together and ensure that families feel included. The team has supported children to successfully return to live with their families.

Children move in to the home in a planned way. The needs of children living in the home are considered alongside the needs of children moving in. However, at times, group living dynamics have impacted on the progress and experiences of some children. The team has appropriately addressed this through utilising direct-work sessions and key conversations with children and liaising with other professionals to improve dynamics in the home.

All children living in the home have experienced previous disruptions in their education. Since living in the home, education attendance has improved for all children. Staff recognise when strategies are not effective and are working with other agencies to proactively address a recent dip in attendance for some children.

Children are encouraged to develop a sense of belonging in the home. They are included in decisions about décor and recently helped to create a games room and space for the home's pet to live in. Children's bedrooms are decorated to reflect their

tastes. There is an ongoing issue with a leak in the roof that needs to be resolved and delays in the completion of maintenance tasks has left the home in need of repair. Some communal areas would benefit from being redecorated and furnishings replaced as they appear worn.

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

Children say they are happy and feel safe living in the home. Professionals agree that children are safe. They are complimentary about the high level of care provided by the team and the progress children make.

Staff understand children's vulnerabilities and the risks they are exposed to in the community and online. Risk and behaviour management plans are detailed and include strategies that staff follow to keep children safe.

The team has responded appropriately to a recent increase in negative behaviours within the home. Children are supported to understand the impact of their behaviours through direct work and frequent discussions with staff. When required, children are referred to specialist services to provide additional support. They also benefit from access to online training programmes to further develop their awareness of issues that may affect them.

There has been a significant reduction in incidents of children going missing from home. When children do go missing from home, staff take appropriate action to locate them and encourage their safe return.

Instances of staff holding children to keep them safe only occur as a last resort. When used, they are low level. However, it was identified during the inspection that an incident of staff intervening to prevent children from hurting each other had not been recorded in line with regulation. This is something the manager has taken action to address.

A high number of sanctions are used as a consequence of negative behaviour. The manager has oversight of these, but they are not always effective in supporting children to make changes to their behaviour, and recordings sometimes lack detail.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The team benefits from the clear leadership and guidance provided by the manager. He is suitably skilled and experienced and holds the relevant qualification. The manager is supported by a trainee manager. Together, they utilise internal and external monitoring systems to maintain strong oversight of practice in the home and are committed to improving outcomes for children. Minor recording discrepancies identified during the inspection are being addressed.

The team is consistent and stable. Several staff have worked for the organisation for a number of years, and they have a strong understanding of the organisation's child-centred ethos. New staff are welcomed into the home and have access to a robust

induction programme. To ensure consistency for children, only staff who work for the organisation and know the children work in the home.

Staff development is a key strength of the organisation. Staff say they feel supported, and that morale is high. To further enhance practice in the home, staff have access to support from a range of professionals, including the organisation's therapy and education teams. All staff benefit from regular supervision, team meetings and an in-depth training programme. However, supervision records are brief and do not always reflect the discussions that take place.

During the inspection, the manager took action to review the presence and function of locks that are present on some communal doors. There is now a risk assessment in place to reflect their purpose.

The recommendation made at the previous inspection has been met.

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
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential; ensure that staff— treat each child with dignity and respect; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need on order to live their comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(iii)(vii)(c)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to ensuring that the roof is repaired, all floor coverings are well maintained, damage caused in the home is repaired and redecorated in a timely manner, and that decoration and furnishings are maintained to a high standard throughout the home.	31 March 2022
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child;	31 March 2022

details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;

the date, time and location of the use of the measure;

a description of the measure and its duration;

details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;

the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.

(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff supervision provides opportunities for staff to reflect and that these discussions are evidenced in supervision records. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.15)
- The registered person should ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature, clearly recorded and maximise the opportunity for children to reflect and learn. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information in a way that is clear and not open to misinterpretation. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: SC008486

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Partnership of Care Today Children's Services

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

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Ryan Knight

Inspector

Caroline Bertram, Social Care Inspector

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