

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC008486
Inspector	Michelle Bacon
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	Gary Wood
Date of last inspection	29/05/2014

Inspection date	17/07/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate
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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This follow up inspection has been undertaken as a result of the previous inspection in May 2014, which judged the home to be inadequate. The home has addressed most of the requirements and recommendations to improve the quality of care and outcomes for young people.

There is evidence that young people are responding to clearer boundaries and expectations. As a result, their attendance and participation in education has improved. Furthermore, young people have begun to engage in activities that support their individual interests.

Safeguarding practices have improved in the home. For example, risk assessments have been improved to highlight specific risks for young people and the procedures staff must follow to reduce potential risks. In addition, staff undertake regular checks to ensure that young people are not smoking in their bedrooms. Staff undertake regular one-to-one sessions with young people. Consequently, young people are beginning to work with staff and accept their support and guidance.

Overall, young people's health needs have improved. Immunisations and LAC health assessments are now up to date. Staff promote a healthy lifestyle. However, some

young people still refuse to attend their dental appointments. Staff continue to encourage young people to be healthy.

The home is well maintained and decorated. Young people are supported to keep their bedrooms clean and tidy and take pride in their environment. They say they like living in the home.

The Registered Manager has demonstrated commitment to and sufficient capacity to improve the home, this now needs to be built upon and sustained to promote better outcomes for all young people. One requirement and one recommendation have been repeated. A further two recommendations have been made relating to: contact arrangements and supervision records.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/05/2014	Full	inadequate
06/03/2014	Interim	good progress
16/05/2013	Full	good
19/12/2012	Interim	good progress

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
11 (2001)	ensure the children's home is conducted so far as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there with particular regard to the assessment, planning and management of new placements to the home (Regulation 11 (1) (a))	18/08/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure young people are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe including outside the home and when using the internet and social media. This relates specifically to staff having training on safeguarding and social media (NMS 4.4)
- ensure young people are supported and encouraged to maintain and develop family contacts and friendships. Appropriate forms of contact are promoted and facilitated, including where appropriate visits to the young person in the home, visits by the young person to relatives or friends or meeting with relatives or friends(NMS 9.1)
- ensure a written or electronic record is kept in the home detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, including the registered person.(NMS 19.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

At the last inspection, outcomes for young people were inadequate because of shortfalls in educational attendance, health, placement planning and safeguarding practices. Some young people had been admitted to the home with high levels of risk-taking behaviours and continued to place themselves at risk. There is a notable improvement to the home since May 2014. Most areas of regulatory shortfall have been positively addressed. Consequently, young people now live in a home that promotes improved outcomes.

Improvements in key work sessions enable young people to reflect on their circumstances and develop an understanding of their background. As a result, young people are learning to accept the support and guidance offered by staff, improving their emotional resilience and self-esteem.

In recent weeks there has been an improvement in young people's attendance and participation in education. Some young people engaged with a learning mentor while a suitable educational placement was found. Young people are proud of what they have achieved in a short period of time. One young person was thrilled to show the inspector the work they had completed at school. This gives young people a sense of achievement and improves their self-esteem.

Young people are generally in good health. They have access to a range of services to meet their physical needs. Immunisations and LAC health assessments are now up to date. Young people have recently attended the gym, which they say they enjoy. However despite good health promotion by staff, young people's health outcomes are potentially compromised, because they continue to refuse dental treatment.

Young people are supported and encouraged to maintain contact with their families. They receive support from staff to manage relationship difficulties. Where there are concerns regarding contact arrangements, staff liaise with social workers to review these. This promotes the welfare and safety for all those concerned.

Some young people have recently been introduced to the in-house semi-independence plan, 15 to independence. This involves them learning how to budget, shop for and cook some meals. All young people engage in household tasks, such as cleaning their bedrooms and doing their laundry. These opportunities provide young people with skills and knowledge which will support them into adulthood.

Quality of care **adequate**

Young people enjoy positive relationships with the staff and each other. It was evident during this inspection that young people are relaxed in the company of staff, and enjoy a good rapport. There is evidence that young people are responding to clearer boundaries and expectations, including when they are expected to be in at night or after school.

It is evident that young people clearly know how to make a complaint. A complaint made since the last inspection has been acted upon and there is a record of the manager's response. However, this has been recorded on a separate sheet and then stapled into the complaints book which means potentially this information could be lost.

Staff provide opportunities for regular one-to-one discussion and individual weekly meetings with young people to discuss their views about the home and their lives. This means young people feel valued and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them.

Placements plans are up to date and identify young people's current needs and how these are to be met in placement. The health needs of young people have improved as staff are encouraging and supporting them to attend their health appointments. The manager has recently requested that the police and a specialist drugs service visit the home in order to talk to the young people about the dangers of drugs; unfortunately they were unable to do a home visit.

At the time of the last inspection, four residents were living in the home. Two young people have now moved on to other placements and two young people remain living in the home. At that time, an area of concern related to the assessment and admission of young people and the lack of consideration given to the individual needs of young people and the potential risks on each other. The home has had no new admissions since then, which means the inspector is unable to test whether the home has improved their practice around new admissions. Therefore this requirement is repeated.

Young people take part in a range of activities. For example, they enjoy going to the cinema, a local music studio and a driving range. The staff and young people are in the process of planning activities for the summer holidays.

Young people live in a clean homely environment. A concern regarding the cleanliness of one young person's bedroom has been positively addressed. The staff support the young person to keep their room clean and tidy by helping them clean it regularly. Young people feel that staff care about them and this improves their feelings of self-worth. Furthermore, staff complete regular checks to ensure young people do not smoke in their bedrooms. This promotes their welfare and safety.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people say they feel safe and that there is no bullying. Previous shortfalls regarding young people's risk assessments have been addressed. Risk assessments clearly identify potential risks for young people and the strategies used to reduce these risks. These are monitored and reviewed at the weekly team meetings to reflect any changes. This means the welfare and safety of young people is safeguarded.

There have not been any allegations or child protection concerns raised in the home since the last inspection. Young people say they can talk to staff if they are worried or concerned.

Staff have undertaken work with young people to develop their understanding about keeping themselves safe. The home works in line with agreed police protocols for managing young people being missing to ensure their safe return. Some young people go missing and do not always return quickly. They are usually recorded as absent because their whereabouts is known. Nevertheless, staff visit known addresses and make contact with young people in an attempt to persuade them to return home. The manager has identified this as a concern and is liaising with the placing authority to address this.

In consultation with individual young people the home has recently developed a rewards system that encourages young people to improve their behaviour. Overall, this is having a positive impact on young people. As a result, there is little use of physical restraint and sanctions. When restraint is used, it is undertaken in line with the home's policy and procedures. Records show that young people are encouraged to record their comments in the disciplinary records; this helps them to understand acceptable social behaviours.

Staff employed at the home are subject to organisational vetting procedures and do not start work in the home until all appropriate checks are complete. All fire, gas and electrical equipment is serviced regularly to ensure they are in good working order.

Leadership and management adequate

The Registered Manager has been in post since 2007, when the home opened. He is suitably qualified, with NVQ 3 and 4 Caring for Children and Young People, and the Registered Managers award. He is also registered to manage another two homes within the organisation, and therefore is not in full time day-to-day charge of the home. There is an assistant manager who has NVQ 3 in childcare that supports the manager. They have put in a lot of work in recent weeks and the majority of requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection have been met. These improvements need to be sustained and further embedded into practice to ensure improved outcomes for young people.

Following a requirement made at the last inspection, the home no longer uses young people's clothing or toiletry allowance to pay for reparation costs incurred. Young people are engaging in a range of activities that enables them to pursue individual interests and hobbies. In addition, information relating to young people has been updated and provides a clearer picture of their time living in the home. However, a recommendation relating to staff having training on safeguarding and social media has not been met. The manager has identified a course relating to safeguarding and e-safety but as yet has not had approval for this from the HR department.

After the last inspection, a monitoring visit was undertaken by two independent visitors. This ensures thorough oversight to promote further improvement. Furthermore, the organisation now integrates the findings from the external monitoring visits with the manager's monitoring to promote and sustain improvements in the home.

Staff receive regular supervision to monitor their practice and address areas of concern. However, it is not clear how often the Registered Manager receives supervision as his records are kept at the organisations head office.

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.