

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, three children were living in the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since July 2022.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

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: 14 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/03/2023	Full	Good
04/01/2022	Full	Good
12/09/2019	Full	Outstanding
09/01/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, one child has left the home and two children have moved in. The child moving out felt they had outgrown the home and wanted to move to a smaller home. While this was unplanned, staff supported the move in the best interests of the child.

Staff provide the children with consistent and nurturing care. This gives the children a clear sense of stability and security. All staff are experienced and hold relevant qualifications for their role and responsibilities.

When children move into the home, visits are arranged beforehand when possible, which enables children to feel fully involved and welcomed into the home. In the case of an emergency admission, the manager arranges to visit the child and gives them information about the home. This helps them to understand the home's function and the facilities it offers. One child who recently moved into the home with minimal notice said, 'I really like it here. Although everything happened quickly, I felt welcomed into the home by everyone. I feel happy here.' Another child, who had the opportunity to visit before moving in, said, 'Although I would have liked to stay at home, because that was not possible then this is the next best place to be. I can talk to any staff member and know they will help me. It does feel like a home here.'

Children's health is improving. The manager and staff make sure that children are registered with health services and supported to attend appointments. When children are anxious about attending appointments, staff carry out additional key-working sessions with them to help minimise their anxiety. Administration of medication is effective, and the recording systems are clear and maintained well. However, the medication cabinet does not have appropriate storage for controlled medication, as required. The manager was addressing this at the time of the inspection.

All children attend education. The manager and staff work closely with education providers to support children who may previously have had poor attendance. Lead safeguarding teachers said that the manager is proactive in liaising with the children's school and providing the necessary support to enable children to attend and engage in their education.

The home provides a warm, welcoming and homely place for children to live. The home has been refurbished, with children having an input into the layout and decor of the home. However, the basement has yet to be completed. The stairs do not have a suitable handrail in place and pose a risk for children and staff. The laundry area is in the basement and the safety issue impacts on children being able to do their own washing in preparation for independence.

Children take part in a range of activities, with staff supporting them to continue with activities and interests they previously had before moving into the home. This provides continuity and stability for them.

When it is appropriate and agreed as part of individual care plans, children are supported to maintain positive relationships with family members and friends. Staff understand the importance of this continued contact and help to facilitate this.

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

Children feel settled in the home. They have positive relationships with staff and say they can share any concerns or worries they may have with them. Staff understand children's vulnerabilities. All children said the staff speak to them about measures to help to keep themselves safe and this contributes to them having a better understanding about staying safe in the community. Risk management plans are in place for each child which identify known and potential risks and include clear strategies to minimise them. These are working documents, kept under review, discussed by staff during weekly staff meetings and amended to reflect any emerging risks. These measures help to support children's safety and welfare.

Staff follow clear procedures in the event of a child going missing from care and make that sure they are welcomed back in a warm and positive manner. The staff ensure that children have independent return home interviews to enable them to discuss reasons why they may have been missing. This provides children with an opportunity to discuss any worries they may have.

Behaviour management plans are in place to help children manage their behaviours. Consequences are implemented for negative behaviours. However, these mainly involve the loss of opportunity to earn bonus money and are not routinely evaluated to see how effective they are.

The manager takes seriously any concerns or complaints children may have, with appropriate action to address these. For example, one child raised concerns in relation to bullying by another child and this was addressed immediately, with additional work and support provided to the children. This resulted in a positive resolution for both children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Until recently, two managers were registered at the home. However, one has now moved to another home and submitted appropriate documentation to the regulator. The remaining manager has been registered since July 2022. He holds a level 3 diploma and is currently undertaking his level 5 qualification in leadership and management. He has high aspirations for children and his practice is child-centred. He has a clear vision for the ongoing development of the home.

The manager is supported by an experienced and qualified manager from another home in the organisation, as well as an experienced staff team that provides

continuity of care and support to the children living at the home. Staff say they feel valued by the manager, and there is clear and effective communication which supports them in their roles. All staff hold an appropriate qualification and complete mandatory training to agreed timescales. In addition, staff have further opportunities to develop their skills, for example, counselling training is planned in the new year.

The home's statement of purpose is up to date and reflects the service provided by the home. This document is available to interested parties on request. Children receive a child-friendly guide about the home. This demonstrates the home's commitment to open and transparent working.

Team meetings, held on a weekly basis, enable staff to discuss progress and reflect on their practice as a team. On occasions, staff meetings are used to deliver further training to develop staff's skills and knowledge. This includes using external professionals, such as local police, who have provided information and guidance in relation to changes in the law relating to substance misuse and the impact of substance misuse on children and adults.

Staff receive monthly supervision which they say is beneficial and enables them to personally reflect on their practice and skills. Feedback from external professionals states that the staff and manager work well together to provide ongoing care and support to children.

The manager maintains good oversight of the home and recognises the home's strengths and areas for ongoing development. He makes use of the independent monitoring to further support this.

The manager has addressed the requirement made at the last inspection in relation to education and effective communication with education providers. He has addressed the recommendation in relation to making every effort to find out where children are when they are not in the home. The recommendation regarding consequences has not been met in full and has been restated.

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, The 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 registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. The registered person must ensure that— medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a)) This relates to ensuring that controlled medication is stored appropriately.	4 January 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature and clearly recorded and that they maximise the opportunity for children to reflect and learn. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the design of the home should, where appropriate, enable children to develop independence skills within the supportive environment of the home, including through encouraging independent use of kitchen and laundry areas. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.25)

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: 2nd Floor, Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 6LR

Responsible individuals: Ellen Fitzpatrick and Sean Fitzpatrick

Registered manager: Joshua Lewis

Inspector

Sarah Oldham, Social Care Inspector

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