

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	06/03/2014

Inspection date	29/05/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	inadequate
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The overall effectiveness of the home is inadequate because the home fails to meet the requirements for an adequate judgement. There are failures to comply with the requirements and, as a result, the outcomes for young people are inadequate and their welfare is not safeguarded. For example, young people placed at the home have high levels of risk-taking behaviours; however poor risk management and risk assessments fail to identify young people's vulnerabilities, including what action should be taken to minimise these risks.

The home has not undertaken an impact risk assessment of new admissions to the home. This means the compatibility of young people has not always been adequately assessed and has the potential to impact negatively on the welfare and safety of all young people living in the home.

Most young people have access to education; however their participation and engagement is limited. Consequently, this impacts on their future life chances and economic well-being. Furthermore, young people's health care plans do not identify how the home plans to address their specific health needs. Consequently, this means the health needs of young people are compromised.

The quality of care is inadequate. Young people are not always safe in the home because supervision by staff is not adequate. For example, young people are smoking in their bedrooms which places them at serious risk. In addition, one young person's bedroom was not clean and was poorly maintained. This impacts on the young person's feelings of self-worth. There have been occasions when young people have had their clothing and toiletry allowance deducted for the purposes of reparation. This is not consistently recorded in the sanctions book. This was raised at the last inspection.

At this inspection, eight requirements and three recommendations for improvement have been made.

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
06/03/2014	Interim	good progress
16/05/2013	Full	good
19/12/2012	Interim	good progress
18/09/2012	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
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))	30/06/2014
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, in particular that risk assessments reflect young people's vulnerabilities, triggers and the action taken to minimise risks (Regulation 11 (1) (a))	30/06/2014

11 (2001)	ensure the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there, in particular take action to ensure young people do not smoke in their bedrooms (Regulation 11(1)(a))	30/06/2014
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in the children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for purpose of which shall include a description of the measure used. This specifically relates to the loss of money referred to as compensation for reparation purposes (Regulation 17B(3)(c))	30/06/2014
18 (2001)	ensure the educational achievement of young people is promoted, in particular by ensuring that young people have access to and make use of educational facilities appropriate to their age, aptitude, needs, interests and potential (Regulation 18 (1) (b))	30/06/2014
20 (2001)	ensure the registered person promotes and protects the physical, emotional and mental health of the children accommodated(Regulation 20(1))	30/06/2014
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home are kept clean, reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31(2)(e))	30/06/2014
34 (2001)	ensure the registered person maintains a system for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home.(Regulation 34)(1)(b))	30/06/2014

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 (I 4)
- ensure children are supported to pursue individual interests and hobbies. This includes taking part in a range of activities, including leisure activities and trips(NMS 7.2)
- ensure that information about the child is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. (I 22.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **inadequate**

Outcomes for young people are inadequate because there are shortfalls in educational attendance, health promotion, placement planning and poor risk management which impacts negatively on the welfare and safety of young people. While some young people experience placement stability and recognise the progress they have made in terms of their behaviour, others are disengaged from the home and refuse to engage with those services that promote their safety and well-being.

All young people have access to routine and specialist health professionals in order that their health needs can be addressed. However, it is not evident from young people's health care plans how their physical, sexual or emotional health is being promoted. Furthermore, they do not make it clear what is being done to support those young people who persistently refuse to engage with these services. Most young people smoke and some have been smoking in their bedrooms. This puts themselves and others at risk.

Until recently some young people have consistently attended their educational placement. However, some young people have been excluded and alternative educational provision has yet to be identified. Other young people new to the home have not attended education since their placement began. This impacts negatively on the educational outcomes for young people and compromises their future life chances and economic well-being.

Young people do not engage in activities in the wider community, such as clubs or sporting activities. Instead they spend time away from the home; staff do not always know their whereabouts or who they are with during these times. Furthermore, it is not known if they are engaging in risk-taking behaviours. This compromises the welfare and safety of young people.

Young people are encouraged and supported to build and maintain links with their families. This is particularly helpful where young people are placed some distance from home or are preparing for their transition back home.

Quality of care **inadequate**

Young people do not always receive the quality of care needed to keep them safe and ensure positive outcomes. Some young people engaged with the inspector during the inspection and expressed mixed views about their relationships with staff. For example, one young person raised a concern with the inspector because they felt unable to speak to the manager about this. Despite this there is evidence within the

home that young people have access to appropriate information on how to make a complaint.

Staff do not set clear consistent boundaries for young people. For example, records show that staff have spoken to young people about going into each other's bedrooms. However, during this inspection some young people were observed in another young person's bedroom unsupervised. Furthermore, staff do not complete daily checks to ensure that young people are not smoking in their rooms. The homes system of reparation is not clear. For example, there have been occasions when young have had some of their clothing or toiletry allowances deducted for the purposes of reparation; the home calls this compensation. Only on one occasion was there a record in the sanctions book. This means the records of this system are inconsistent and unclear. This was raised as a recommendation at the last inspection and is now a requirement.

Records show that key information such as local authority care plans for one young person refers to their previous placement. This means young people do not benefit from appropriately planned care that is up to date in order to meet their needs. Furthermore, the home has not fully assessed information at the point of referral to identify potential risks to young people, and ensure that the matching of placements does not impact on the welfare and safety of all young people.

Young people's risk assessments are unclear about their level of risk. This means that risk assessments for those young people with a history of high risk taking behaviours are poor. Consequently, young people's welfare and safety is compromised because their risk assessments lack clear strategies in order to manage and reduce potential risks.

Some young people's health needs are not fully promoted because needs relating to smoking, immunisations, sexual health and emotional well-being are not recorded in their plans. This means it is not clear if young people are provided with guidance, support and advice in order for them to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Overall, young people live in a clean homely environment. A young person had to move bedrooms recently because their room sustained fire damage due to a discarded cigarette. The inspector observed that their present room was not sufficiently clean or well maintained. The young person has not been given appropriate support to help clean and maintain their room. This impacts on their poor self-esteem and does not create a comfortable, nurturing environment for this young person.

Keeping children and young people safe inadequate

The home fails to ensure young people are protected from significant harm. Poor risk assessments and placement planning has impacted on the welfare and safety of young people.

Young people have potentially placed themselves and others at risk both inside and outside of the home. For example, young people smoke in their bedrooms and this presents a significant risk; especially given a prior incident resulting in fire damage as a consequence of a discarded cigarette. Also when absent from the home there are concerns some young people are at risk from sexual exploitation. However, risk assessments fail to highlight suitable strategies in order to manage and monitor these concerns. Furthermore, two risk assessments for one young person actually had the names of young people who do not live at this home recorded in them. Staff follow the agreed police protocols for reporting young people who are missing to ensure their prompt return.

Staff very rarely use restraint, and they are appropriately trained in behaviour management. The manager oversees the records of restraint to ensure the measure was appropriate and young people's welfare maintained.

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

Leadership and management

inadequate

The Registered Manager has been in post since 2007, when the home opened. He is suitably qualified to undertake his responsibilities, holding qualifications at NVQ 3 and 4 Caring for Children and Young People, and the Registered Managers award. The manager is also the registered manager for 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 is qualified to NVQ 3 level in childcare. However, the leadership and management of the home is not effective as it has failed to promote improved outcomes for all young people. Furthermore, there are failures in the regulations that impact negatively on the welfare and safety of young people.

The majority of the staff team have a suitable childcare qualification. Young people benefit from a stable staff team. Two new staff have recently started working in the home and are currently undertaking their induction. Staff receive support through regular team meetings and supervision. They also receive mandatory training to assist them in their role in order to care for young people more effectively

Three recommendations from the last inspection have not been fully addressed. For example, it is still not clear what work has been undertaken with young people in order to help keep themselves safe when using the internet and social media. The

recommendation relating to young people's sanction's has not been met and is re-issued as a requirement. There is also a requirement in relation to young people's risk assessments.

The monitoring of the home is not sufficiently robust as it fails to raise standards of care for young people living at the home.

Information relating to young people is not clear accurate or up-to-date. This means young people do not receive the appropriate care to meet their needs. Furthermore, records of young people's key work sessions do not clearly identify the member of staff completing this piece of work. This is not helpful for young people accessing their records in the future.

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.