

SC021677

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 operated by a private organisation and is registered for four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home has a qualified and experienced registered manager.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 June 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account good

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
13/06/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/11/2016	Full	Requires improvement

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

Recommendations

- Children should be supported to express themselves as individuals and should be given an appropriate degree of freedom and choice in relation to day-to-day arrangements for care. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.21). In particular young people should receive encouragement to individualise their bedrooms and personal space.
- Staff should encourage children to share any concerns about their care or any other matters as soon as they arise. Records must be held and provide detail of any investigation undertaken as a result of concerns raised. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.13)
- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that all of their staff have been adequately trained in the principles of restraint and any restraint techniques are appropriate to the needs of the children that the home is set up to care for, as defined in the home's statement of purpose. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.56)
- Each child should have permission for staff to administer first aid and non-prescribed medication from a person with parental responsibility for them. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.14). Specifically, records must be kept of all administered medication including the reason why it was given.
- Staff should be skilled in understanding the range of influences that friendships can have and should encourage those with a positive impact and discourage those with a negative impact. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.8). Specifically, staff should ensure that young people's friendships are known and monitored.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last interim inspection on 5 February 2018, one young person has been admitted and one discharged from the service. The young person who has been discharged was assessed as having additional complex needs and is now accommodated in a smaller setting. At the time of the inspection, three young people remain in placement.

Relationships between young people and staff are based on mutual regard and respect. Staff listen to young people and are consistent in engaging at a level they understand and respond to. Young people were observed as being confident in the company of staff, and they share appropriate banter and discussions. One young person said, 'I really like it here. The staff are funny. It's the manager's job to make me laugh in the morning.'

Consultation with young people is well developed. Young people benefit from regular young people's meetings, which they are supported to chair and manage. Likewise, regular one-to-one consultation meetings, key-work sessions and a review of the home's practice are also undertaken. A staff member said, 'We are working hard to include the young people in the decisions made in the home. We are also working with independent reviewing officers to enable young people to have more control and involvement in the chairing of their statutory reviews.' As a result, young people have gained a sense of positive control in their lives and are invested in their placement.

Residential care planning is good. Young people understand the aim of the placement and are making positive progress towards their individual goals and targets. Young people review their progress towards identified targets via detailed monthly summaries. This means they have up-to-date and clear objectives for the month ahead. A social worker said, 'The staff are fantastic with my young person. He has made excellent progress. We are really pleased how the placement is progressing.'

Education attendance and attainment are areas of significant development. Since living at this home, all young people are in attendance at suitable educational placements. Attendance and attainment are good. A social worker said, 'The staff liaise with the school all the time. This means that my young person gets the support he needs. His attendance has increased from 2% to 90%. They are really committed to helping him achieve his best.'

Healthcare planning is good. Young people are registered with local practitioners and receive good support from external agencies, such as the looked after children's nurse, dietitian and child and adolescent mental health services. Staff support young people who have a significant fear of dental work to take positive steps forward and receive the treatment they need in order to have a happy and healthy smile. However, there is one area for improvement. Records of non-prescribed medication do not state the reason for administration. Therefore, patterns in minor ill-health cannot be consistently reviewed. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

A particular strength within this home is the relationships staff build with parents. As a result, most difficulties are addressed and young people have regular contact with family and friends. A young person said, 'I didn't see my family much before I came to live here. We have worked together and now I can have overnight stays.'

Planned and unplanned activities take place regularly. Young people enjoy both group and individual activities, such as quad biking, camping, cycling and trips to theme parks. Staff promote regular exercise. Consequently, young people have improved health, fitness and confidence.

Young people are supported to develop independence skills in accordance with their age, ability and understanding. Young people were observed preparing meals, arranging menus, preparing their laundry and helping to tidy around the home. Although no young people currently have a plan of independence, staff ensure that they learn basic skills that are valuable to their everyday lives.

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

Young people's safety is suitably protected in the home. The designated officer said, 'We have no concerns about how the home is operating or the young people who are living there.' There are no current child protection concerns within this home.

Risk assessments are developed in partnership with placing social workers. On the whole, they detail the action to be taken to reduce and minimise risk and the response to identified risk. Staff say, 'We review risk assessments all the time in team meetings and look at different ways of working with young people. This is good because we are all working in the same way and this has helped to reduce risks.'

Physical intervention is rarely used in the home. Staff focus on de-escalation and redirection techniques in order to defuse situations. On the whole, this has proven successful, with only two recent interventions taking place within the last two years. However, records of physical intervention do not state what intervention was used in accordance with Team Teach strategies. This lack of detail means the intervention cannot be fully evaluated for effectiveness. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

Detailed individual missing from home plans are in place, and this ensures that the correct procedures and strategies are implemented without delay should incidents occur. Staff work with the police and have provided individual vulnerability and risk profiles for each young person to ensure that they are prioritised in the event they should be missing from home. Since the last interim inspection on 5 February 2018, there have been three incidents where young people have been reported as missing. Through effective partnership working, each young person returned quickly and was provided with a suitable return home interview. Since living in this home, all three young people have made significant progress in reducing episodes of missing from home.

Young people know how to complain. Information is provided in the young people's guide and organisational complaints documents. Since the last inspection, there have been two complaints made by young people. Although young people are satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, records do not demonstrate the investigation process. Consequently, records do not support how a resolution and outcome were made. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

Individual behaviour management plans identify triggers for negative behaviour and provide some direction on the management of unacceptable behaviours. Records of both positive and restorative sanctions are clear. A social worker said, 'The staff are very straight to the point; the young people understand and work within the boundaries.'

Young people are encouraged to maintain and form positive friendships within the community. On the whole, this has been successful, with some young people going for tea or activities with friends and their families in the local area. However, although staff recognise that some historical friendships have the potential to have a negative influence, there are occasions where staff are not always clear on who young people are spending time with. Consequently, some friendships are not monitored to ensure that young people are not participating in negative activities. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has been in post since April 2014. He holds the diploma in social work and has extensive experience in working with children and young people in a residential setting. The registered manager is supported by an experienced and qualified staff team.

Good internal monitoring systems provide the home with a clear approach to the overall monitoring of care. Records highlight areas for development and are a reflection of some of the matters identified within this inspection.

In response to a recommendation made at the last interim inspection on 5 February 2018, the children's home is currently undergoing a refurbishment programme to the bathrooms. In addition, young people have chosen a new carpet for the hall, stairs and landing, which is due to be fitted once the bathrooms are complete. Young people's bedrooms require some improvement. Although there have been some attempts to personalise their individual rooms, they remain sparse and colourless. Consequently, they do not represent warm and cosy bedrooms for young people to settle into. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

The home employs a committed and enthusiastic staff team, with the majority of staff suitably qualified at diploma level. The training of staff at this level ensures that they are suitably qualified in the care and management of young people. Likewise, staff receive consistent and relevant training in the home. A staff member said, 'Training is good. We have face-to-face and online training and this is always relevant to the work we do.'

Staff receive good support from the registered manager and assistant manager. A staff member said, 'They are always on hand for any advice we need.' In response to a recommendation made at the last interim inspection on 5 February 2018, supervision now routinely includes a review of the whistle-blowing policy. This is also reviewed in monthly team meetings. Consequently, staff understand their duty to safeguard young people and report any practice that raises concern.

The manager and staff demonstrate that they are committed to developing and improving practice. The effectiveness of this approach is measurable in the progress young people make from their initial starting point.

The manager is aware of the procedure for notifying Ofsted of incidents under regulation 40 and submits notifications accordingly.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC021677

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: Anthony Garmory

Inspector

Maria McGranaghan, social care inspector

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