

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC021677
Inspector	Maria McGranaghan
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	POST VACANT / Anthony Garmory
Date of last inspection	14/02/2014

Inspection date	16/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action taken against this home

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people make good progress in a home that provides individualised care. This supports young people to experience and enjoy a sense of achievement particularly in areas such as, education, a reduction in risk taking behaviour and developing and sustaining positive relationships with staff.

Detailed placement plans ensure that young people's needs are suitably identified and assessed. For example, productive relationships are formed between partner agencies and this ensures that young people receive the right help, support and guidance they need to make suitable changes in their lives. Likewise, young people's views and opinions serve to influence the care planning process and this assists them to feel in control of their lives.

Young people safety is suitably managed in the home. Good safeguarding systems are in place and risk assessments set out strategies to reduce potential risk. Likewise, proactive relationships with external agencies result in young people being fully supported to understand the implications of risk taking behaviour.

Young people live in a home with a supportive and stable staff team. Regular supervision and training enable staff to maintain the good standards of care that are

evident within the home. Young people form trusting relationships with staff which assist them to make progress in many aspects of their lives.

The home is suitably managed. The manager has made application to become the Registered Manager of the home and has undertaken a fit person interview with Ofsted where he was deemed fit to manage.

Suitable internal monitoring systems are in place that serve to identify areas for growth and development while taking into account the weaknesses of the service. Likewise, regular external monitoring provides the home with an independent view of the service provision and serves to enhance the overall performance of the home.

However, despite these strengths there are areas of weakness. Some records such as, keywork sessions, and sanctions do not provide sufficient detail. For example, some keywork sessions do not reflect the level of work undertaken with young people and some sanctions do not relate to the behaviour exhibited by young people. Likewise, although detailed residential care plans and risk assessments are in place, some are not consistently updated. The home has commenced a redecoration programme however, there has been some delay in getting the work completed. Therefore some rooms such as the dining room require completing. Further consideration also needs to be given to ensure all young people are engaged purposefully in education, employment or training. Consequently, four recommendations are made at this inspection.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered with Ofsted to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people of either sex who may be experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/02/2014	Interim	good progress
09/10/2013	Full	good
13/03/2013	Interim	good progress
08/08/2012	Full	good

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure all areas of the home provides a comfortable and homely environment that is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure young people are supported to attend school, college or alternative provision regularly (NMS 8.3)
- ensure sanctions are clear and purposeful to reflect the behaviour exhibited by young people (NMS 3.8)
- ensure a system is in place to monitor the quality of records including that they are kept up to date and provide a clear overview of the work undertaken. This is with specific regard to care plans and risk assessments (NMS 22.1 22.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

From their initial starting point young people make good progress in the home. Specifically, young people with an extensive history of non-educational attendance and involvement criminal activity become settled into a routine that supports consistent achievements. Young people say, 'I have settled down and like it here. I attend school every day and really like the teachers, it is better than being at home.'

Young people benefit from consistent health care. The looked after children's nurse commented, 'Young people are well cared for and their needs appropriately addressed. I have built up very good relationships with them and this has helped them to understand about teenage health issues.' Similarly, young people with a history of poor self-care and hygiene now take pride in their appearance and are conscientious about their daily personal hygiene routine. For example, young people with a history of refusing dental appointments, now attend and receive the appropriate treatment. As a result, young people develop better self-esteem and confidence and are proud of their appearance.

Relationships between young people and staff are very well developed. Young people say, 'Staff are top. They are the best. I get on with all of them but my keyworker is the best. I really like living here.' Staff say, 'Young people all have their own personalities, likes and dislikes. We understand that some young people have issues around trusting adults so we work hard to get to know them and work at a pace best suited to them.'

Young people confirm they are consulted on matters within the home and say, 'We have helped to decide how the home is to be decorated including our bedrooms and we decide activities, menu's and treats. We have young people's meetings and consultation meetings where we discuss everything. If we want to change something we can just talk to staff.' As a result, young people feel valued within the home.

Family contact is viewed with high regard and planned in order to best suit the needs of the young people. Consequently, young people benefit from very well supported contact that includes young people visiting their local community, parents visiting the home and frequent telephone contact. Young people say, 'Contact is good. I get to see my mum and brothers and we have a good time. Staff are always there if things start to go wrong.' Consequently, young people feel they are appropriately supported to maintain the bonds with those closest to them.

Young people enjoy recreational activities suited to their individual personalities and interests such as, paintballing, laser quest, go-carting and attending the cinema. They enjoy activities as a group and individual activities such as attendance at the local youth club, park or cycle centre. Young people say, 'if we want to try something

different we just ask. The activities are great we really enjoy them and the staff always take part which is funny.'

From their initial starting point young people begin to develop appropriate skills in self-care and money management. For some young people simple tasks prove difficult such as, personal hygiene, bedtime routines and simple cooking tasks. However, young people have taken on the challenge and have made consistently good progress in this area. They can now make basic meals from scratch, attend to their laundry needs and look after their personal hygiene.

Quality of care

adequate

Young people know how to complain. Information is provided in the young people's guide and organisational complaints documents. Procedures for managing complaints are in place and clear evidence demonstrates that they are handled fairly and investigated thoroughly by the manager or external nominated person. Young people say, 'The staff are fair and they do listen to us. If we are unhappy we can talk to staff, social worker or family. We can also write it down. I have no complaints.' Similarly, complaints from external sources are well managed. Records provide a detailed analysis of actions taken to remedy any concerns raised within the community. As a result, young people and community members feel their concerns are taken seriously because prompt action is taken by staff working in the home.

On the whole young people's residential placement plans are suitably written and provide a useful overview of individual need. The home works in partnership with external services and this ensures young people are afforded additional support in order to maximise their overall experience. However, some plans are not consistently updated to include the most relevant individual targets and goals. Likewise, some keywork sessions do not always fully capture the work undertaken with young people, such as the work undertaken to reduce risk taking behaviours and re-establishing education. These records are important to young people should they wish to track their journey through care now or in the future.

Young people benefit from plans that identify individual heritage, identity, sexuality and faith. Young people are encouraged to pursue their individual beliefs and are offered opportunities to develop their understanding of individual choice and difference. For example, posters, leaflets, books and discussions with staff assist young people to develop a positive self-view and an understanding of what makes them a unique and special person.

Young people's health is suitably promoted because of consistent health care. Regular consultation with health professionals ensure young people have a good understanding of issues such as drugs, alcohol, sex and relationships and personal safety including internet safety. Likewise, some young people engage well with external services such as the child and adolescent health service and the looked after

children's nurse. Consequently this wrap-around approach enables young people to begin to take positive steps forward in addressing some difficult issues in their lives.

From their initial starting point, most young people with a history of educational disruption and non-attendance make progress in the home. Staff work hard to motivate young people and enable them to understand the value of education. Suitable education packages are developed and include, home tuition with a qualified teacher and placements within alternative education provision. For most attendance is good. Young people have settled into a routine and now see education as part of their daily lives. However, for some young people taking a step back into education proves difficult resulting in limited attendance despite the encouragement and efforts of staff. As a result, some young people do not attain and this reduces their life chances within employment as an adult.

Staff make sure young people are provided with opportunities and experiences that help to shape their lives. Events such as, paintballing, laser quest and go-carting are enjoyed by all residents within the home. Likewise, community activities such as attending the youth club or assisting in the 'clean up the park' fun day enable young people to make friends and become part of their community. Young people say, 'We took the BBQ and made burgers and sausages for everyone helping out. We did a really good job. The park looked great afterwards.'

Young people live in a home that blends into the residential area. Young people are central to making the house into their home and proudly display photographs, drawings and comments around the home. However, delays in completing a refurbishment programme has resulted in some areas of the home such as the dining room being incomplete. Consequently, not all areas of the home provide a homely environment for young people.

Keeping children and young people safe good

The safety of young people is prioritised within the home. Good working relationships with external agencies combined with suitable risk management ensure that young people are provided with the correct level of support to maintain their safety.

Staff are suitably trained in the area of child protection in order that they are able to respond to suspicions or allegations of abuse. Appropriate policies are in place to ensure the correct procedures are undertaken without delay should a concern arise. Likewise, individual risk assessments highlight specific risk factors for young people and the measures to be taken to minimise risk. It is clear that since being placed in the home, there has been a reduction in young people being missing or taking part in criminal activities. Staff say, 'We work really hard to build good relationships with young people and I think this is why they work with us.' However, some risk assessments are not routinely updated in order to highlight changes in risk management practice. For example, where risk has reduced. Consequently, these risk

assessments do not reflect the current risk management arrangements for some young people.

Staff receive appropriate training in order to appropriately manage physical intervention within the home. Staff are clear that physical intervention is only used to prevent a young person harming themselves or others. Appropriate procedures are in place to support the homes minimal intervention strategy. Consequently, de-escalation techniques prove successful as there have been no episodes of physical intervention since the last inspection.

Young people are supported to live together and respect each other as individuals with different life experiences, needs and opinions. Likewise, young people are enabled to learn about behaviours such as bullying both from a victim and perpetrator prospective. Keywork sessions and young people's meetings take place regularly and this empowers young people to recognise the impact of both on themselves and others. Young people say, 'We argue sometimes and fall out, but it is soon forgotten. Staff always talk to us about fall outs, but it's normal not to get on all the time.'

Young people's positive behaviour is consistently acknowledged and praised within the home. Individual behaviour management plans, keywork sessions and personal incentive schemes are in place to assist young people to develop an understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and provide a useful tool for addressing some negative behaviour. However, some behaviours are not managed consistently or in line with behaviour management plans. For example, some sanctions are not reflective of the behaviours being exhibited. Although this is minimal, it is essential that behaviour management is consistent so that young people learn about the impact of their behaviour through suitable consequential means. As a result, opportunities to address specific behaviours in accordance with the behaviour management plans are missed.

The home employs a robust recruitment procedure that ensures young people are looked after by staff that are appropriately checked in order to work in the home. Visitors are appropriately vetted and this helps to make sure that young people are protected while in their home. Likewise, staff promote young people's on-going protection by undertaking regular fire drills and service tests making sure that all faults are suitably addressed.

Leadership and management

good

The manager has been in post since June 2014. He has undertaken a fit person interview conducted in December 2014 by Ofsted in order to become the Registered Manager. He brings to the role over thirty years children and families experience including thirteen years as a manager and senior manager. He is suitably qualified to undertake her responsibilities with a Certificate in Qualified Social Work and NVQ at

level 3 and 4.

Young people live in a home that is suitably managed. The home meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose and young people, their families and social workers are clear about the support the home provides.

The manager and staff demonstrate a commitment in their work with young people. The strong and capable staff team are consistent in their delivery of child care practice which is tailored to young people's individual needs. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the good progress young people make.

The external monitoring of the home is suitable. Evidence indicates clear lines of enquiry including discussions with young people and their families. Likewise, internal monitoring ensures the manager has a realistic understanding of the strengths of the service. A development plan is in place and highlights areas for improvement and the action to be taken to enhance the service. Likewise, a newly developed community risk assessment identifies local amenities, facilities and potential hazards and this proves useful when assessing new referrals to the home. As a result, young people benefit from a consistent approach to their care including sufficient numbers of staff on duty to meet their individual needs in the most suitable way.

Young people are looked after by a caring and competent staff team with suitable skills and experience. The majority of staff are trained at NVQ level three and access a suitable training programme providing them with the opportunity to further develop their skills and knowledge in their work with young people. Similarly, staff receive a good level of support and supervision in order to maintain the standards of care practice in the home.

The manager is aware of the procedure for notifying Ofsted of incidents under Regulation 30, Schedule five. This practice ensures that information is shared with the regulatory agency and others in order that the actions and outcomes for young people can be suitably assessed.

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.