

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	04/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC021683
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	The Partnership of Care Today Children's Services
Registered person address	Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, STOCKPORT, Cheshire, SK2 6LR

Responsible individual	Vivien Snape
Registered manager	Eric Healey
Inspector	Charlie Bamber

Inspection date	04/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained Effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC021683

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Some young people frequently go missing and can be missing for extended periods of time, placing themselves at risk of harm, staff take appropriate action at these times to keep young people safe.
- Some young people's attendance at education is poor and they do not make good educational progress, other young people are not in any form of education, training or employment.
- Some young people engage in criminal and anti-social behaviour. Although there are some signs of this reducing as placements progress this is not sustained for all young people.
- Due to lack of attendance at education, some young people are not in positive, structured routines and can find it difficult to motivate themselves. Staff are not always effective in ensuring that young people are motivated to participate in education or training.
- Young people do not consistently engage in positive activities outside of the home and do not make a positive contribution to the wider community.
- Staff are not trained in keeping young people safe in their use of the internet and social media. This prevents them from ensuring young people are safe from exposure to harm in their internet use.
- Not all records and documentation are kept up to date.
- There is no recent development plan for the home to drive improvement and ensure the home has purpose and direction in its ongoing development.

The children's home strengths

- The relationships between staff and young people are based on trust and respect. Because staff show respect to young people, young people gradually learn to reciprocate this.
- The home's specific behaviour management techniques result in a significant reduction in damage to property and aggression towards staff.
- The staff team are highly stable and staff retention is high which promotes consistency for young people.
- A particular strength of the home is that young people's views are listened to. They are highly engaged with the running of the home.
- Staff at the home genuinely care about the young people who live there and young people recognise and appreciate this.
- The manager advocates passionately for young people, particularly if he believes they are not being listened to.
- At times staff make great efforts to engage the young people in a positive activity such as a day out. When this happens the young people benefit greatly from the experience.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
8: The education standard. In order to meet the education standard the registered person must ensure; (1) children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.	02/11/2015
36: Children's case records 9!0(a) and (b) The registered person must maintain records for each child which include the information and documents listed in schedule 3 for each child and are kept up to date. This refers specifically to ensuring that a copy of the most recent local authority review of the placement plan and the local authority personal education plan are on file.	21/09/2015
14: The care planning standard. In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure (2)(e)(ii)that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plan is requested if the child is, or has been, persistently absent from the home without permission.	07/09/2015
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure; (2)(b) that the home's day to day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively	07/09/2015

from harm; specifically this relates to reducing the frequency and duration of missing from home episodes and reduce young people's involvement with the police through criminal activity	
40: Notification of a serious event. (4)(e)The registered person must notify HMCI without delay if there is any incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. This relates to notifications in respect of young people who are missing from care for prolonged periods of time.	05/08/2015
9: The enjoyment and achievement standard. In order to meet the enjoyment and achievement standard the registered person must ensure (2)(ii)that staff help each child to participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences.	02/11/2015
13: The leadership and management standard. In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person (2)(g)(iii) is required to demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by the use of monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. Specifically that the home should have an up to date development plan in place setting targets for continuing the homes improvement and development.	02/11/2015

Recommendations

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

- Standard 12. When a child returns to the home after being missing or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. The guide to the quality standards p.45, 9.30

- Standard 12. Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed and recorded in the home's workforce plan. Specifically this related to staff being trained in internet and online safety for young people and having plans in place to monitor their internet use. The guide to the quality standards p.43, 9.12

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private company and provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities. The home is organised so that it offers both a small family-group type of placement for two young people, and two supported, self-contained , living units.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/03/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
19/11/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
20/03/2014	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	requires improvement
Since the last full inspection there have been a number of changes to the resident group. Some young people have been well supported to have positive transitions into their next placement, others have experienced placement breakdown through being missing from care for extended periods. Young people who are new to the home have planned moves and have usually had the opportunity to visit the placement and meet the staff and other residents prior to their placement commencing. This helps them settle and quickly become part of the home and to make a positive start to their placement. Staff recognise the uniqueness of each resident and devise individualised plans for their care. This promotes positive relationships between staff and young people and conflict is rare. Feedback from young people consistently shows that they are highly satisfied with their staff at the home and the relationships they have formed. Attendance and engagement with education could be significantly improved. Despite staff efforts some young people refuse to enrol on any training or education as they wish to move back to their placing authority area and this can mean they are out of education for periods of time. Other young people are in education but find it very difficult to maintain a positive routine of attending education and their progress suffers as a result of this. Young people are encouraged to become involved in decision making about their care and placement as soon as they arrive. They contribute to plans to manage their behaviour and reduce their risks and this helps them address some of their more challenging behaviours. This results, for example, in the damage caused to the home by young people significantly decreasing over time. Young people's views are sought on the home's decoration and they are encouraged to personalise their rooms or flats. Whilst staff try to get young people engaged in activities and hobbies outside and within the home, young people show great reluctance to participate in any organised activity. They occasionally engage in a day trip with staff which provides them with positive experiences, but they would benefit from sustained efforts to increase their participation. The home effectively supports family contact, and staff recognise the importance of belonging to the young people placed there. The often go to great lengths to	

ensure young people have adequate family and friends contact, particularly at difficult times such as Christmas.

Young people receive effective support to prepare them for the transition into independent living. They are taught how to manage on a budget, how to prepare meals, do laundry and look after themselves. Young people are allowed a high level of independence in preparation for moving on, whilst this is positive in many ways, it also allows them the opportunity to engage in some anti-social and criminal activity.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
The risks associated with individual young people are understood and appropriate risk assessments and risk management strategies are in place. However, young people continue to place themselves at risk, therefore the strategies to reduce risk are not always effective. Some young people living at this home are, or have been involved in criminal and anti-social behaviour. Their engagement with the youth offending teams is supported by the home and their engagement is generally good, but they continue to become involved in criminal behaviour necessitating police and court intervention. Drug misuse is acknowledged as a problem for some young people living at this home. There is good evidence that drug awareness is promoted and that staff do individual work with young people on the dangers of drug misuse, but the problem persists. The home needs to implement more robust strategies to reduce young people's drug misuse in order to fully support them to become drug free. The incidents of missing from care are high for some young people when they arrive at this home. For some, the episodes reduce over time, for others the incidents continue. There have been incidents of extended missing from home episodes for some young people which have ultimately resulted in them being discharged from the home's care in an unplanned way. For other young people extended missing episodes allow them to associate with people who negatively influence them and this conflicts with some good progress made whilst the young people are not missing from care. Notifications of missing from care that go on for lengthy periods of time are not always made to Ofsted. The home has not requested a review of placement from the local authority in line with regulations for young people who persistently go missing from the home.	

There is a co-ordinated response to young people who go missing. Staff are aware of, and implement, the requirements of statutory guidance for young people who are missing. Young people who go missing receive a return interview by a manager from another home within the company but they are not receiving return home interviews by an independent person organised by the local authority and there is no evidence to suggest the home challenges local authorities in this respect.

The risk assessments for some young people in relation to bullying are high. Staff are highly vigilant in this area and work hard to ensure that young people have positive relationships with each other and that no young person in their care is subject to bullying or discrimination.

Violence and aggression in the home are reduced over time and behaviour is positively managed in a way that negates the need for physical management of behaviour.

Staff have not been trained in on-line safety and in keeping young people safe in their use of the internet and social media. All the young people placed at this home have access to the internet via their mobile phones and there are no systems in place to monitor their use or to ensure they are kept safe from associated risks.

Staff have good knowledge of safeguarding procedures and are clear about their role and responsibilities should any safeguarding concerns arise.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The home has an appropriately qualified and registered manager in place who has been in post since 2007. Staff report feeling well supported and that the manager is readily available to them. The manager is passionate about providing the best care and experiences to the young people in his care and ensuring that they feel valued and cared for in the home. He has high expectations that his staff share his aspirations for the young people. The staff team are stable, with many of the staff having been in post for several years. All care staff have the appropriate NVQ qualification and significant experience in working with children and young people. The home does not use agency staff to cover annual leave and sickness and this provides continuity of care to young people.	

There is a statement of purpose in place that is up to date and relevant. The home meets the aims and objectives of its statement of purpose. The development plan for the home has not been updated and therefore there is not a current targeted plan for the staff team to be working towards.

Record keeping for young people could be improved upon in a number of areas, for example ensuring that young people have their most recent review and personal education plan on file.

The internal and external monitoring of the home is completed regularly and the reports are forwarded to Ofsted. The independent person's monitoring reports have a new format which presents the information in a way that is much more accessible than previously.

The home is adequately resourced and is appropriately decorated and furnished to meet the young people's needs.

The home has taken appropriate action to address most of the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection. There are seven requirements and two recommendations made at this inspection.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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