

# SC021683

Registered provider: The Partnership of Care Today

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is a partnership-run children's home providing care and accommodation for up to four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The home is run by an experienced registered manager who has been employed at the home since March 2007.

**Inspection dates:** 5 to 6 February 2020

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

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

**Date of last inspection:** 12 September 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 12/09/2018      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness         |
| 30/04/2018      | Full            | Good                            |
| 17/10/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness         |
| 07/06/2017      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

## 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, 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   |
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| <p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—<br/>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;</p> <p>maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement;</p> <p>raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority;</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access</p> | 29/05/2020 |

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| <p>educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible;</p> <p>help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment;</p> <p>help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and</p> <p>that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x) and (b))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                   |
| <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be</p> | <p>29/05/2020</p> |

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| <p>supportive or harmful; and</p> <p>have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)(xii) and (xiii))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(e)(h))</p> | 29/05/2020 |

## Recommendations

- Ensure that case records, specifically of key-work sessions are maintained, kept up to date and recorded in a way that is helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The overall experience of young people in this home is good. Young people say that they are happy with the quality of care they receive and that they enjoy living in the home. Two young people were resident at the time of the inspection and a third young person was on home leave.

The structure of the home is two large Victorian houses joined together to form one big home. One side of the building provides care and accommodation for young people requiring semi-independent living, from the age of 16 to 18 years. The other side of the building is a children's home. Generally, the home requires some modernisation and would benefit from a refurbishment to ensure that it maintains a homely environment and has enough communal areas. The staff office and manager's office are situated at the top of the building. This can make it difficult for managers to be accessible to staff and young people or for managers to be in tune with the day-to-day activities within the home.

The strengths of the home are to support young people to transition to live independently or return home to family. One young person has successfully moved to live in his own flat and has a full-time job. Another young person has moved back to live in his family home. Staff continue to support young people when they leave the home post-18 years of age. They have worked with families to ensure that a successful transition takes place and on occasion have helped to furnish and/or decorate the new living environment.

Young people have access to primary care health services and are registered with the local services. Local drug agencies provide support for those young people who require some support due to their substance misuse. For one young person, substance misuse has reduced.

Although young people have access to education at the point of referral, young people would benefit from more detailed plans from the placing authority regarding their education plans. This would ensure that young people have a clear plan and are in education without delay. This is important for those young people who have been out of education for some time and require bespoke education plans. Some young people are not in full-time education and would benefit from structured activities to ensure that they benefit from a range of learning opportunities and do not get bored. A young person said, 'I like it here. Sometimes it is boring as I don't have much to do.'

One young person spoke to the inspector about his experience of living in the home, 'It is fair, and I like living here. There's a good compromise between staff and they let you do stuff.'

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

Young people are helped and protected by a staff team that is committed to keeping young people safe. All young people have risk assessments and staff have a good understanding of any risks. This ensures that all young people are kept safe. Young people do not sign risk assessments and consequently young people may lack some understanding of the concerns regarding their risk-taking behaviours. Missing from care procedures are suitably followed for those young people who are missing from care. Staff work alongside the police and social workers to ensure the safe return of young people.

Young people have key-work sessions with staff and some of these sessions are not always recorded. The sessions lack content and are often completed in response to an incident rather than structured sessions. Consequently, young people may not fully learn to understand their behaviours or learn skills to change behaviours without the opportunity to reflect and think about their actions.

All young people have impact assessments prior to coming to the home. A significant and important piece of information was missed on one young person's file. This may have had significant safeguarding concerns for this young person and other young people in the home. Management oversight may have prevented this from occurring. No serious safeguarding incidents occurred due to this error.

Young people are helped and supported to have successful transitions to independence. Staff support young people with key life skills such as cooking, shopping, budgeting and employment and training opportunities. Young people successfully move through the transition process to help them lead more independent lives. Staff will continue to support the young person for a period and recognise that for some young people this can be a lonely time.

Staff help young people to repair fractious family relationships and support young people to have positive contact with their friends and family members.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

The registered manager is a committed and nurturing manager. He speaks of the young people with genuine love and care. The registered manager has been in post for several years. The registered manager understands the needs of young people and will go above and beyond to support young people. He is supported by a deputy manager who has also been in her role for many years.

Some staff have been in post for several years. This demonstrates a committed workforce whose members enjoy coming to work and want to help young people. The registered manager reported that sometimes staff are reluctant to take on additional tasks and acknowledged there have been some shortfalls in staff and management oversight in ensuring that files are kept up to date. The inspector felt that there was clearly lots of good-quality work being done in the home, but this was hard to evidence due to lack of recording. A requirement has been made to address this matter to ensure that the manager addresses his role and responsibilities and promotes active teamwork.

Staff have regular training opportunities to ensure that they are kept up to date with new knowledge and learning to inform their practice. Staff also have access to regular supervision. The quality of supervision could be improved as supervision sessions are not reflective and evidence showed that supervision recordings were repetitive. Reflective supervision would allow staff to think in depth about their practice and how they can look to improve this.

Internal and external monitoring tools help the registered manager to evaluate the

strengths and weaknesses of his home. An independent visitor provides scrutiny and evaluation of the home and sets any required recommendations. The registered manager is expected to respond in a timely manner to ensure that improvements to the home are completed.

There are good working relationships with professionals. All professionals that were consulted as part of the inspection spoke highly of the home and staff team. A social worker said, 'I can't ask for more support for [name]. They really supported [name] a lot. One good thing is that they have been able to support him in the best interest for him. They go out of their way.'

## **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:** SC021683

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** The Partnership of Care Today

**Registered provider address:** Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 6LR

**Registered manager:** Eric Healey

## Inspector

Kamal Bhamra: social care inspector

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