

SC021683

Registered provider: The Partnership of Care Today Children's Services

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a private organisation. It offers care and accommodation for four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection date: 17 October 2017

Judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 7 June 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home required improvement at the last full inspection.

At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

At the last inspection, on 7 June 2017, five requirements and six recommendations were made to address the shortfalls in practice. This interim inspection will look at the progress made in relation to these matters.

Since the last inspection, two young people have moved on from the service. One young person has successfully moved into independent accommodation. Another young person has now been placed in alternative accommodation as a result of risk-taking behaviours. Two young people have moved into the home. At the time of the inspection, three young people are accommodated.

At the last inspection, a requirement was made in relation to recognising and managing risk. Progress has been made in this area. All young people now have an up-to-date risk

assessment. Each assessment highlights the potential for risk and the strategies in place to reduce risk. All staff have received refresher child protection training and share the view expressed by one staff member: 'Our number one priority is the young people's safety. We will do whatever it takes to keep them safe.' This has resulted in a significant reduction in young people being reported as missing or engaging in criminal activities.

Care planning documentation is now up to date and includes pertinent information such as psychological assessments to guide staff in the care and management of young people. Key-work sessions are now linked more to the daily plans for young people and are taking place on a regular basis. The quality of these sessions is improved. However, further development is required in the planning, review and outcome of key-work sessions to ensure that young people receive the most effective and consistent care.

Behaviour management strategies have improved. Staff are more consistent in challenging some unacceptable behaviour and examples of both positive and negative consequences highlight this. However, attempts to safeguard some young people compromise the management of unacceptable behaviours. For example, young people who refuse to engage in education are provided with lifts to and from friends' houses. A staff member said: 'If we give them a lift, we know they are safe. If we don't give them a lift, they will go anyway and we don't know they are safe.' This means that there is a failure to identify and address the non-engagement of some young people in the home. As a result, some behaviour is not appropriately challenged in order to effect long-term positive change.

One young person has improved their educational attendance and attainment. He gained three GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 and is now attending a full-time college course for computer programming. His attendance is consistently good and he is appropriately supported by staff.

Two new admissions to the home have a significant history of non-attendance within education. The home has been successful in securing both new residents with educational placements and private tuition to assist them to develop and catch up on essential educational skills. Although staff encourage young people to attend, they struggle to engage on a consistent basis. Effective strategies to address the non-attendance are not in place. Staff say: 'They have given it a go and we will keep encouraging them. We find it difficult when there are friends and family close by because it is too easy for young people to want to be with them rather than in school.'

Residential care plans are in place and updated through the home's 'tracker system'. Young people are registered with health professionals and attend appointments with the support of staff. Key-work sessions now take place and young people all benefit from one-to-one support in developing independence skills including cooking, cleaning and budgeting. However, there are aspects of care planning that require further development. For example, young people do not engage in activities and tend to spend a lot of time away from the home with friends. As a result, relationships with staff are not fully formed and this is having an impact on the progress being made to meet individual placement targets.

Since the last full inspection in June 2017, there has been some progress in addressing the shortfalls in practice. However, further development and progress are required in the areas of education, behaviour management, activities and forming trusting relationships. As a result, four recommendations are made to address these shortfalls. Additionally, one requirement is restated in relation to regulation 45 internal monitoring of the home. The home is judged to have sustained effectiveness at this interim inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/06/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/09/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/06/2016	Full	Good
26/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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, the 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
Ensure when completing the quality care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it, and any actions the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided. (Regulation 45(2)(a)(b)(c))	17/11/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that children's home staff act as effective advocates for or on behalf of the child who may be experiencing difficulties with education or training matters including, but not limited to, attainment, admissions, attendance or behaviour, as any good parent would. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.12)
- Ensure that the behaviour management strategy is understood and applied at all times by staff, kept under review and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)
- Ensure that young people are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside the home (where appropriate) and are encouraged to participate in those activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)
- Ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive and which provides appropriate boundaries. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs by building strong and trusting relationships in a way a good parent would – this is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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 Children's Services

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

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Eric Healey

Inspector

Maria McGranaghan, social care inspector

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