

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC021683
Inspector	Anthony Kyem
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Care Today (Children's Services) Ltd
Registered person address	Lansdowne House 85 Buxton Road STOCKPORT Cheshire SK2 6LR
Responsible individual	Vivien Anne Snape
Registered manager	Eric Joseph Healey
Date of last inspection	20/03/2014

Inspection date	19/11/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Young people benefit from effective support and protection. Young people are kept safe and have strong sense of personal safety. There are no breaches of regulations or failures to meet the national minimum standards that impact negatively on the welfare and safety of young people. Young people benefit from good relationships with staff and they sustain their positive attachments. Young people's views about their care and their relationships with staff, are consistently positive.

Young people report, It's good I like the staff and the manager. I came from custody and they help me...Its great here, especially the staff. Staff are pretty lenient and not too strict. The best thing is the staff.

Young people benefit from good quality care that improves outcomes for them. Care planning and practice are highly individualised to meet the needs of individual young people. The views of young people are central to how the home operates and develops its practice. Young people are involved in key decisions so they can influence the running of the home. Managers and leaders have a good understanding of the home's strengths and they tackle identified weaknesses to secure, improvement. Young people benefit from a home that is managed efficiently and effectively.

A social worker reports, 'I would just like to say that this placement has bent over backwards for him.'

Young people report, 'They do what they can for us and help us with our problems. My education's going pretty well and I'm meeting my academic achievements. The activities are pretty good, we go snooker and cinema. I like to watch a lot of films. I have contact with my family every weekend that's good.'

As a result of this inspection, there are a small number of requirements and recommendations made for the registered person, to address. These relate to health and safety, improved recording of grumbles or concerns, providing staff with suitable training on child sexual exploitation, obtaining consent where there is independent access to young people's records and ensuring young people attend school, training or alternative educational provision.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home, run by a company, 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
20/03/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
07/01/2014	Full	good
27/02/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
15/08/2012	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
27 (2001)	ensure that all person's employed by the registered person receive appropriate training, with particular reference to the provision of training in the management of sexualised behaviour (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	02/03/2015
33 (2001)	ensure the independent person when carrying out a visit under regulation 33, shall inspect the premises of the children's home, and such of the children's home's records, as the independent person requires, save for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent to the	26/01/2015

	inspection of those records by the independent person. (Regulation 33(1) (8)(b))	
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Recommendations

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

- ensure children receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints raised and are kept informed of progress. This relates specifically, to the appropriate recording of grumbles, concerns or informal complaints (NMS 1.6)
- ensure the homes procedures are compatible with and have regard to the runaway and missing from home and care protocols and procedures maintained and managed by the police and the local authority, this relates specifically, to missing from care risk assessments (NMS 5.6)
- help children to achieve their educational or training goals and work with a child's education provider to maximise each child's achievement and to minimise any underachievement (NMS 8.4)
- ensure the home is well maintained, with particular regard to replacing the front door bell or door knock on the front entrance door (NMS 10.3)
- ensure risk assessments of the whole children's home are carried out to identify any potential sources of harm to young people, this relates specifically to the frequency of portable electrical appliances tests (NMS 10.8)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people make adequate progress to develop emotional resilience and a positive self-view. Staff help young people to learn from their past experiences and they help them to move forward and plan for the future. Staff are positive role models for young people. Young people benefit from good support from staff, they look up to and learn from. Staff work positively and pro-actively with young people.

Young people benefit from good support to promote their positive health. Young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians so they have prompt access to the services they need, when they need them. This includes specialist support and services to promote their physical, emotional and psychological well-being. Young people benefit from general encouragement and support to attend their routine health appointments. Young people's medication is stored and administered safely, by trained and competent staff. The arrangements for dealing with young people's medication are safe and effective.

Young people are taught about key health issues to help them lead and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Young people benefit from advice and support to reduce their risk taking behaviours, such as drug use and offending. There is evidence that some young people's risk taking activities are either controlled or decreasing. However, some young people continue to place themselves at risk of harm.

Young people who have struggled to attend education previously, are supported to re-engage in some form of education or training. However, not all young people currently attend school, training or alternative educational provision, regularly. The educational achievement of young people is satisfactory, taking into account both their attainment and progress in relation to their individual starting points.

Young people benefit from good support to have regular contact with their friends and family. As a result, young people maintain their close relationships with the people who are most important to them. Staff work pro-actively and positively with the families of young people to promote positive outcomes for them. Staff promote continuity of care and enhance young people's support networks for the future.

Staff teach young people the skills they will need as adults. Young people develop practical skills in cooking, shopping and budgeting. Eligible care leavers have pathway plans to promote their smooth transition to adulthood. They are not engaged in training or employment to promote their economic well-being. Young people are allowed to take appropriate risks to promote their growth and natural development.

There are some young people in placement who are unwilling to cooperate with their plans and want to move for reasons beyond the home's control. This makes it difficult

for staff, to work with them. However, staff are effective at building positive and constructive relationships with difficult and often hard to reach young people. They have the skills and capacity to help young people's turn their lives around. Staff do not give up on young people.

Quality of care

good

Young people benefit from good quality care and support that improves outcomes for them. Young people enjoy good relationships with staff and they sustain their positive attachments. Staff invest in their relationships with young people. These relationships are instrumental to the progress young people make and the outcomes they achieve.

Young people enjoy living at the home where they develop a real sense of belonging. It is common for ex resident young people to keep in contact with staff. Young people view staff like extended friends and family. This is testament to the good work, commitment and dedication of staff and it shows the depth and quality of young people's attachments. Care planning and practice is highly individualised to meet the needs of individual young people. Young people's needs arising from age, gender, race and ethnicity, are all positively addressed in both care planning and daily living. Staff develop effective partnerships with other professionals agencies and the families of young people to improve outcomes for them.

A young person's relative reports, 'I think the home are now getting through to him and are doing a good job supporting him...Without the help this home has provided for my grandson I do not think he would be at the stage he is at now.'

Young people know how to make a complaint and their rights are promoted effectively. However, there was one issue raised by young people that was not recorded as a complaint or a concern. This issue was dealt with by the manager informally and appropriate action was taken. However, there are no records to demonstrate the above. A recommendation is made in respect of this issue. This has not had a negative impact on young people.

Staff routinely involve young people in key decisions so they feel able to influence the running of the home. As a result, young people feel valued, respected and involved. Staff help young people to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes, in all cases. This ensures young people understand the rationale behind staff decision making.

The home's centralised location ensures young people benefit from easy access to shops and local amenities. As a result, young people can access places of particular interest to them. The home's current safe location review is being updated. Young people benefit from positive and enjoyable activities. They develop their self-confidence, social skills, friendships, interests and hobbies.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people are kept safe and feel safe. Young people have a strong sense of personal safety. Staff are trained in child protection so they how to deal with any allegations and report suspected abuse. Some, but not all staff, have received appropriate training in child sexual exploitation. Young people do not engage in sexually harmful, risk taking behaviour. However, should they do, staff are insufficiently trained.

Young people are protected from abuse, bullying and all other forms of significant harm. There have been no allegations of abuse since the previous inspection. There have been no referrals to children and young people's services. Visitors to the home are chaperoned and there is suitable monitoring of such people. Prospective employees are selected and vetted carefully, to protect young people from unsuitable people.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practice. The use of clear risk assessment and safe working practice protect young people from harm. However, there are some young people whose risk taking behaviours have recently put them at high risk of harm. This is particularly evident when young people go missing for a sustained period. Other young people's risk taking behaviours are either controlled or decreasing. Staff have taken appropriate action to promote the safety of young people in their care.

Staff take prompt action to promote young people's safe return, if they are missing. Return interviews are now completed with individual young people. This enables staff to minimise risk and understand the reasons why, young people go missing. However, risk assessments for reporting young people missing are not compatible with the joint protocols and procedures maintained by the police and the local authority. Consequently, the systems used to highlight, and if necessary, escalate young people's particular vulnerabilities could be improved to promote young people's safety.

Staff promote young people's positive behaviour. They maintain good order and effective discipline within the home. There is zero tolerance towards unacceptable behaviour. Issues to do with bullying are addressed effectively to promote the safety of young people. Young people do not identify bullying as being an issue them. The home has introduced a bullying book to monitor incidents of bullying. However, this is not being used effectively. There has been one incident identified that had not been recorded appropriately.

The use of sanctions are kept to an absolute minimum. Staff go to great lengths as not to criminalise young people's behaviour. Staff use a restorative approach to encourage young people to take responsibility for their behaviour. The use of

restraint, if used at all, is only ever used as a last resort to protect young people from accident, harm or injury. Staff are trained to manage the behaviours of young people safely and effectively.

Young people benefit from physically safe and appropriately secure accommodation. Health and safety matters are generally handled effectively. Most of the home appliances are tested and serviced regularly. For example, there is annual safety inspection of the home's fire-fighting equipment and gas appliances. However, portable electrical appliances are tested less frequently, which has the potential to compromise the safety of young people.

Leadership and management

adequate

The home is adequately resourced. The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose.

The home has taken appropriate action to address most of the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection. Those that have not been met are repeated. These relate to staff training and improving young people's engagement in training and education.

Young people benefit from a manager who exercises effective leadership of the home's operation. The home employs a well-qualified and experienced registered manager, who has been in post since their registration with Ofsted in 2007. The manager is extremely passionate about working for young people. He consistently strives to achieve the best outcomes possible for them. Managers and leaders communicate high expectations to staff about sustaining improvement. They stimulate staff's enthusiasm and they channel their efforts effectively.

The home can demonstrate its capacity for continuing improvement based on its track record and performance since the previous inspection. Managers and leaders can demonstrate the value and impact the home has made to the lives of individual young people. Young people's outcomes are improved overtime and staff do not give up on young people. Significant incidents are notified to the appropriate authorities charged with a duty to protect young people. This ensures appropriate action can be taken to support and protect young people.

Some young people are reluctant to engage in their plans, currently. The home is working creatively with these young people to get them back on track and promote improved outcomes for them. For example, one young person who currently refuses to return to the home, has now agreed to return as part of a planned shared care arrangement. This will enable staff to support the young person with their independence and plans for the future.

Staff have sufficient qualifications, training and experience to meet the needs and numbers of young people. Young people benefit from a close knit staff group who

work effectively, as a team. Staff benefit from effective support, high quality training and professional supervision. This ensures that staff develop their knowledge, skills and practice in caring for young people.

The performance of the home is monitored effectively in a way that promotes improved outcomes for young people. Leaders and managers routinely make good use of the home's monitoring activities to improve the quality of young people's care. Identified weaknesses are tackled systematically, to secure the home's improvement. Consent has yet to be obtained from young people's placing authorities to enable the independent person to access their records. These monitoring systems combined ensure there is effective and regular monitoring of the service provided for young people.

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.