

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 social, emotional or mental health difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2020. The structure of the home is two large Victorian houses joined together to form one big home, with two children able to live on each side.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 4 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/11/2021	Full	Good
05/02/2020	Full	Good
12/09/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/04/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Three children live at the home. Two of them have recently moved in with the aim of being supported to prepare for adulthood. The children enjoy living there and have built good relationships with the staff.

All children are attending education suitable to their needs and are making progress. The staff team encourages and promotes education. However, staff do not know the information contained in one of the children's education, health and care plan. This means there are missed opportunities to support the child further with agreed targets and strategies.

Staff are supporting one child with a recent diagnosis. The manager has arranged for the team to receive appropriate training and has ensured that there has been in-house training in a staff meeting as an interim measure. This means that staff have the knowledge to support the child effectively.

Children's cultural, religious and identity needs are supported and responded to sensitively by the staff. This results in children feeling supported to explore who they are in a safe environment.

Time with family is supported in line with children's plans. Staff support families well and, on one occasion, provided furniture and helped to decorate the family home to ensure that the child was staying in a safe and clean environment when visiting family.

Children say that they know how to make a complaint and feel confident to speak to the staff if there is something worrying them.

One half of the home has been set up to support children to develop their independence skills ready for their next chapter. However, although there is evidence of this happening, the children say that they are unsure of how the staff are preparing and supporting them to become independent.

The home is large but feels institutional in some places. This includes locked cupboards in the living room and locks on communal doors. The front garden is large. Although the manager had identified a risk and requested work to be completed, there are not currently any railings on the basement window wells. This means there is a risk of injury.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff have a good understanding of children's individual risks. Risk management plans are reviewed regularly. This means that staff have the information needed to keep children safe.

When children are reported as missing from home, staff actively look for them and work with other professionals to minimise the risk of future incidents. Staff request that return home interviews take place, and children are supported sensitively on their return. However, the manager does not evaluate incident reports. This means that there are missed opportunities to review staff practice, skills and knowledge.

Staff have not used restraint, and incidents are rare. This means that staff are able to de-escalate situations effectively. Positive consequences outweigh negative consequences, meaning that positive behaviour is supported and encouraged. The effectiveness of any consequences used is reviewed weekly. However, when staff search a child's bedroom, they have not always clearly recorded the reasons why or informed children about the search.

Managers have addressed allegations and have appropriately reported them to the relevant agencies. Restorative work has been completed with the child and staff member, when appropriate, to rebuild relationships.

Managers use safer recruitment processes. This means that children are supported by staff who are suitable to work with them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably experienced and qualified. He also has responsibility for another of the organisation's homes.

Staff say that they feel well supported, and their skills and knowledge are developed by their manager. Supervision takes place regularly, and staff say they have the opportunity to discuss the children. However, the manager is not receiving regular supervision to review his performance and oversight of the home.

The manager is child-centred and has high aspirations for the children. He and the staff are good advocates for the children. However, the manager does not use escalation processes when appropriate to ensure that children receive regular updates of ongoing investigations.

The manager does not use agency staff, and shortfalls in the rota are covered by staff in the team or with regular bank staff. However, rotas do not include the full names of staff working in the home and the actual hours worked, including the manager. This does not meet the regulation.

Independent visits take place monthly and include children's feedback on their experiences of living in the home. The manager completes quality of care reviews. These processes ensure that the manager has a good oversight of the progress of children and the quality of care provided.

Staff are appropriately trained to meet the needs of the children in their care. The manager arranges for each staff member to research a topic and then feedback in

allocated team meetings. This means that staff are continually developing their knowledge and skills.

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
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(vi)) This relates specifically to staff supporting children to understand the purpose of them living in the flats and how they will be supported to develop their independence.	11 April 2023
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) This relates specifically to the adding of railings to the basement window wells.	11 April 2023

The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children’s home’s premises; and any limitation placed on a child’s privacy or access to any area of the home’s premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) This relates specifically to the removal of locks on internal communal doors and the removal of locks from cupboards in communal areas.	11 April 2023
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children’s home. A copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home, and a record of the actual rosters worked. (Regulation 37 (1) schedule 4 (3)) This relates specifically to full names being used on the rosters, including the managers, and the actual hours worked.	11 April 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children’s bedrooms are only searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. Immediate searching may be necessary when there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is a risk to the child’s or another person’s safety or well-being (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than ‘institutional’ impression. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- The registered person should ensure that evaluations of missing-from-home incidents are undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.31)
- The registered person should ensure that there are systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that they take the initiative in identifying others who must play a part for their children and engage with those relevant people proactively, advocating for the children in their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.7)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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 address: 2nd Floor, Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road,
STOCKPORT, Cheshire SK2 6LR

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Nigel Evans

Inspector

Kerri Lynch-Mahoney, Social Care Inspector

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