

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	29/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC021683
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Name of registered provider	Care Today
Address of registered provider	2nd Floor Lansdowne Road Heaviley Stockport SK2 6LR
Registered manager	Eric Healey
Inspector	Maria McGranaghan

Inspection date	29/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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 The home is judged to have sustained effectiveness. The home is run by a suitably experienced and qualified registered manager who has been in post for over 16 years. The post holder plans to retire in May 2017, and arrangements are in place to ensure the smooth transition of a new manager to the home. Young people living at the home have experienced a high number of placement breakdowns with subsequent moves to different provisions. As a result, young people find difficulty in developing trusting relationships with adults. However, due to the commitment, motivation and determination of the staff team, most young people develop in confidence and build solid relationships in the home. Since the last inspection, two young people have left the service. One young person moved back to his placing authority, and the other young person was discharged from the home. There have been no new admissions. Two young people continue to reside in the home and are making good progress. Young people have full-time education placements. Attendance can occasionally fluctuate, but on the whole is good, with some young people achieving 100% attendance. Staff work very well with education providers and ensure that young people are provided with sufficient support during the school day. Consequently, some young people succeed and achieve qualifications, including GCSE and entrance level examinations. Since the last inspection, episodes of young people being missing have increased as a result of a new admission to the home. The registered manager and staff work well with the police, parents and local authority to address risk management and the suitability of the placement. There were delays in the local authority securing a more appropriate placement. However, the home continued in its efforts to try to reduce episodes of missing and to form a relationship with the young person. The registered manager said, 'I have learned from this experience. We are in the process of changing our statement of purpose to clarify that where a placement is not suitable and the young person's behaviour is placing them at risk, local authorities must honour the notice given.' Young people benefit from regular contact with family members. The registered manager and staff work hard to re-establish relationships, and this has proven	

successful, with some young people spending weekends with family members. Likewise, staff are adept at including families in the care planning for young people, particularly in addressing risk-taking behaviours. Consequently, relationships between staff and families are well formed and beneficial to young people.

Young people are encouraged to take part in social and community activities. Some young people are members of the gym and others play football, attend go-carting and cycling. All young people enjoy regular trips to the coast, where they enjoy walking, collecting shells and relaxing. These trips have proven particularly beneficial for young people who find difficulty in talking about their individual journey, and plans for the future. Evidence shows that young people engage much better with staff, when addressing difficult topics, when they are in an open environment.

At the last inspection, two requirements and four recommendations were made to improve practice in the home, and there is evidence of improvement in the following areas.

Active recruitment for a female member of staff is underway, to address the gender imbalance in the team. However, during the interim period, the deputy manager is undertaking shifts, and a female from another service regularly undertakes activity sessions with the boys. This enables young people to develop trusting relationships with female role models.

Staff are receiving training in the use of the home's electronic records and are now able to record and upload information pertinent to the care of the young people. Likewise, written records are now beginning to be written with more clarity and are updated specifically with details of consequences and room searches.

The registered manager and deputy manager are taking active roles in reviewing the quality of the work undertaken in the home. This is work in progress, while staff continue to receive training in developing records. Staff are working well with young people to encourage them to review their files and the work undertaken with them. Staff anticipate that, now the home is settled, young people may be more willing to engage in this task. This recommendation is repeated.

Information about this children's home

The children's home is operated by a private company. It is registered to accommodate up to four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/06/2016	Full	Good
26/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/08/2015	Full	Requires improvement

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that young people are actively encouraged to read their records and to add further information to them. They should be regularly reminded of their rights to see information kept about them and be given information about how they might be supported to access their records in later life. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.6)
- Ensure that the home only accepts placements when it is satisfied that it can respond to the child's assessed needs and has fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group. Managers must take timely and appropriate action when the needs of the child cannot be appropriately met. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection, we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 that 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 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.

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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