

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	05/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC049189
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	The Partnership of Care Today Children's Services
Registered person address	Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, STOCKPORT, Cheshire, SK2 6LR

Responsible individual	Mrs Vivien Snape
Registered manager	Mr Dave Edwards
Inspector	Sarah Oldham

Inspection date	05/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
	Adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC049189

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people live in a warm and welcoming environment. They benefit from having strong and positive relationships with staff. Their views are central to the care they receive. Where their wishes are unable to be followed due to presenting risks, the reasons are clearly explained to them. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to safeguarding and have a good knowledge of child protection procedures.
- Most young people make good progress enabling them to move on in a planned and positive manner. The home works in partnership with social workers, other professionals, and parents to ensure continuity of care and support. One social worker commented the home had made a significant difference for a young person, enabling him to return home. His parent also said the home had provided excellent support to help facilitate this. All social workers said staff shared information, worked in partnership with them and this enables implantation of good, effective planning.
- Educational outcomes have improved. Staff are proactive in supporting young people to engage in education, even those young people who previously had limited attendance. This has enabled them to take exams in preparation for further education and their futures.
- Health outcomes have improved. Young people previously involved in taking 'legal highs' have been supported to understand the overall negative impact on their health and have subsequently stopped doing so. They also take part in a range of activities to further promote their physical health and provide them with alternative activities and hobbies.
- The Registered Manager and deputy manager are experienced and overall provide effective leadership. The staff team consist of staff with experience and those that are relatively new to working with children and young people. Those without a qualification in working with young people are currently undertaking this as well as attending mandatory training. To further support all staff members training and development, training sessions form part of the regular staff meetings where current practice and issues are discussed. There is ongoing recruitment to address some staffing shortfalls. Placements of young people are made following an initial referral to the organisations main office. The manager reviews the referral but does not undertake a detailed impact assessment to ensure impact to the dynamics of the group of young people can be managed effectively. This has resulted in a placement placed in an emergency lasting longer than originally planned. The manager is aware of this shortfall and has taken

steps to address this.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard with particular reference to impact assessments, the registered person must: (2)(f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home.	30/10/2015
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard with particular reference to staffing, the registered manager must: (2)(d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff.	30/10/2015

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to three children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/02/2015	CH - Full	Requires improvement
28/08/2014	CH - Interim	Not judged
21/02/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people live within a children's home that provides effective support to maintain their safety and wellbeing. They are well cared for, respected, and supported. This enables them to make good progress, develop positive self-esteem and gain confidence in themselves and their abilities. One young person said 'I have really enjoyed living here. Staff are great; they listen to me but set me straight when I'm acting stupid and messing things up. They don't judge me and I have made more progress here than anywhere previously.' Staff have high aspirations for the young people. They are nurturing and supportive, enabling young people to settle in well and make positive progress and achieve their potential. Parents and social workers who say staff work in partnership with them also confirm this. One parent said 'the difference this home has made to my child has been amazing. They have supported him and also us as a family, so much so, he is returning home so we can live as a family again.' Social workers also comment on the positive working relationship they have with the home. One social worker said, 'the communication is really good. Staff provide consistent levels of support to engage this young person with their education and development of skills in preparation for them moving out of the home in a positive and planned way.' The staff ensure the young people are central to all their plans. Regular consultation enables young people to share their views. They say they are really listened to by staff. This has given them confidence to voice their wishes and views in their reviews and be integral to all aspects of future plans. They know how to raise any concerns or complaints and are confident these will be addressed. Engagement in education has been positive for most young people. One young person said this has enabled him to take exams and plan for his future education when he moves on from the home. Previously attendance at any education had been very limited. Staff work with schools to support attendance. They attend parents' evenings and liaise with teachers to provide further encouragement and support, demonstrating to young people the importance of education. Health promotion is good. Young people receive advice and support about the risks of smoking, taking illegal substances and the effects of 'legal highs'. This has resulted in one young person no longer taking these 'legal highs' resulting in a positive impact on his overall health and wellbeing. This young person commented 'I didn't realise what an impact it was having on me. I feel so much better and I'm	

really pleased that staff helped me to understand the effect they had on me.'

Activity planning is on an individual basis in accordance with the young people's interests and likes. This includes football, boxing, use of local leisure facilities, fishing, and engagement in the wider community. Individual photograph albums capture their experiences and enable them to have a record to help reflect on the things they like to do and the progress they have made. When young people are reluctant to take part in activities, staff continue to encourage and support them to find something they like to do through researching what is available within the wider community. They also have a range of computer and game console games, currently enjoyed by all the young people at the home.

Visits to family and friends, where appropriate, are fully encouraged and supported by staff. One parent said 'the staff are always so welcoming, friendly and supportive. This has not always been the case in other homes that my son has lived in.' This positive engagement enables young people to continue to maintain and develop their relationships.

Support for moving onto adulthood and future independence is ongoing. This includes learning about budgeting, shopping, and preparing food as well as looking after their bedrooms and sharing in the general upkeep of the home.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people say they feel safe at the home. The vast majority of the young people are of an age where they are asserting their own choice for independence. Staff provide guidance and support to enable them to have a good understanding of risks and behaviours that may increase risks. However, there are occasions when young people choose not to follow this advice. For example, they may not return to the home at agreed times and do not respond to efforts made by staff to contact them. Staff follow agreed individual protocols to establish where young people are and support them to return to the home. This includes working with police and reporting them missing if they are not contactable within the agreed timeframe identified in their individual risk assessments. Upon return to the home, they are offered return home interviews to establish if there was a reason for their missing. Some young people choose not to take part in these. However, young people say they would tell staff if they were unhappy about something at the home. All staff know the local community police officer and the specialist officers to contact. There have been occasions when the police have visited the home to	

Speak with individual young people about their behaviour. This enables staff to work in partnership with police and update risk assessments and care plans accordingly to enable effective support to continue.

Sometimes young people continue to test agreed boundaries as part of their overall care plan. Staff work with them to reduce negative behaviour but are aware of individual trigger points and how situations may escalate. They have agreed strategies in place to minimise this risk, including positive rewards to acknowledge positive behaviour. Sanctions have generally decreased and there has been minimal occasions when physical intervention has been required to promote young people's safety and wellbeing.

The home is well maintained and all appropriate health and safety checks are in place to ensure the ongoing safety for all people within the home. Damage or repairs are completed in a timely manner and young people are encouraged to take an interest in their home by choosing and being involved in decorating their individual bedrooms as well as communal areas. The home is in a residential area within distance of local shops and public transport. The home has previously had some complaints from neighbours but has worked with them to rectify any areas of concern. Regular review of the home's location risk assessment enables the manager to keep an overview of the suitability of the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The Registered Manager is qualified, experienced and has been registered at the home since May 2007. A deputy manager and staff team who demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting young people to be secure, confident and to make positive progress in all areas of their lives support him within his role. However, there have been some occasions when, due to staff shortages, the manager has had to form part of the care rota, taking him away from the overall management of the home. Further recruitment is taking place to ensure the staff team are at full complement to meet the needs of young people. The manager ensures open dialogue is maintained with placing authority social workers to promote good working relationships which provide a positive impact on young people. He assesses individual referrals to the home to make a decision whether the home is able to meet the specific needs of the young person. However, the manager does not routinely complete formal impact assessments. This has resulted in a recent placement on an emergency at the home which has provided some instability for the other young people. The manager has recognised this and has reflected on how to minimise this happening again.	

The home's aims and objectives are set out in its Statement of Purpose. This is available to all interested parties. Young people receive a guide to the home which details what they can expect when living there. Both documents are reviewed regularly. Staff receive support and supervision to enable them to develop and reflect on their practice. This is on both a formal and informal basis. Regular staff meetings also further develop their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Training on a variety of subjects is included within these meetings which supports staff to maintain their skills and knowledge in line with changes to legislation and guidance. In addition, mandatory and formal training is available through on-line training and face to face training. Young people at the home have also completed some of the on-line training; this includes first aid and food hygiene. This provides them with additional qualifications to add to their portfolio of achievements for their future.

Young people's records are well maintained and enable an understanding of their progress during their time living at the home. They are encouraged to add any comments to their files if they wish to do so. All records are stored securely to maintain confidentiality.

Effective monitoring systems are in place to ensure an overview of the quality of care provided. This is through both internal monitoring by the manager and independent external monitoring. The views of young people, their parents, external professionals and other relevant people form part of this to ensure any concerns or shortfalls are identified and acted upon in a timely manner.

The manager has a development plan in place to further develop the service. He is aware of potential shortfalls in the design of the building and has worked with young people and staff to make the layout and design of the home work for them. The home is two properties combined as one and this means there are separate entrances and stairways within the home. Recent door chimes and alarms alert staff if anyone is trying to gain access to the building through either of the two front and two back doors. Décor throughout has been updated and soft furnishings updated. One young person said 'the home feels more homely and comfortable now.'

The recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed and this demonstrates a clear commitment by the manager to continually improve the service provided by the home.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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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