

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC049189
Inspector	Sarah Oldham
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	Dave Deric Edwards
Date of last inspection	28/08/2014

Inspection date	06/02/2015
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Previous inspection	not judged
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Young people receive care and support to help them to make progress, taking into account the short time they have been placed at the home. They have developed positive relationships with staff, and this has enabled them to begin to address previous behaviours which placed them at risk of harm or involvement in criminal activities. Placing social workers speak positively about the impact for young people. One social worker said 'since (name) commenced living at the home he has engaged positively with education and adhered to agreed boundaries. The care he is receiving is good and the home is proactive in keeping me informed of the progress he is making.'

Care planning is individualised to meet young people's needs and enables them to be supported to achieve their overall goals and aspirations in a positive manner. Behaviours are generally managed well and this has a direct impact in the reduction of behaviours that place young people at risk of harm. This includes missing from home and involvement in negative behaviours that places them at risk of criminal prosecution. Individual risk assessments are in place and are, in the main, robust. However, a recent incident at the home had not been fully risk assessed resulting in a young person supporting another young person to gain unauthorised access to the home. However, this has been addressed by the Registered manager with all staff being made aware of procedures to follow to minimise this risk.

Young people speak positively about the home. One young person said 'I have been made to feel welcome here and have been encouraged to go to school and achieve qualifications for my future. Staff here listen to me and this has helped me to improve my behaviours I like it here and want to stay until I'm ready to move onto living on my own.'

The home provides information and regular updates to placing social workers. Regular monitoring of the home is undertaken through monthly independent visits and the Registered Manager's monthly and quarterly monitoring reports. This demonstrates oversight of the home and outcomes for young people. As a result of this inspection, three recommendations have been made. These are in relation to ensuring the home is secured safely to reduce the risk of unauthorised access, all staff to undertake training to enhance their professional knowledge specifically in relation to drug misuse, and ensuring staff follow protocols regarding room searches to promote safety and welfare.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to three young people, who may be experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and managed by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/08/2014	Interim	not judged
21/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
18/07/2013	Full	adequate
27/02/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure each home only carries out searches of a child, their room or their possessions in accordance with the home's guidance. This relates specifically to room searches being conducted to promote safety of young people when there are concerns raised regarding unauthorised people on the premises (NMS 3.20)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. Avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting. This is in relation to windows that enable unauthorised access to the home are safely secured at night. (NMS 10.3)
- ensure the learning and development programme which staff and volunteers are supported to undertake includes training to enhance individual skills to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments. This relates specifically to understanding signs and symptoms of the use of illegal drugs and 'legal highs' . (NMS 18.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people benefit from support to settle into the home and have begun to develop positive relationships with staff, taking into account the short period of time they have lived there. This support is enabling them to have an understanding about their past and their plans for the future.

Regular one to one sessions enable young people to discuss their plans and aspirations for their future. It also enables them to address past behaviours, which have impacted on their progress. Young people speak positively about the placement and the communication with staff.

Young people have the opportunity to take part in a range of activities based upon their interests and choices. These include attending the gym, taking part in music within a studio and making use of the local leisure facilities. These measures not only stimulate individual interests but also contribute to health promotion and support to develop friendships within the local community.

Young people are registered with health care professionals and are supported to attend health care appointments. Staff provide young people with support regarding smoking cessation and the negative impact 'legal highs' have on overall health. However, staff have not received any specific training in relation to a better understanding of the signs, symptoms or longer term effectiveness of 'legal highs'. Young people continue to smoke and although reduction has been noted in the taking of 'legal highs' this still places young people's health at risk in the longer term.

Education is promoted well and young people are attending school placements on a higher number of occasions than prior to placement at the home. Staff also undertake educational work with them, including attending a music related educational activity, museums and support with homework. This means that attendance and involvement with education has increased for young people since their move to the home.

Young people benefit from appropriate support to maintain contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them; these contacts are supported sensitively. Where restrictions are in place, staff help young people to understand the reasons why. If supervised support is required, staff ensure this is available and work with placing authority social workers to discuss and review restrictions and how contact can be facilitated.

Support to plan for future independence is discussed with young people and they have commenced a structured plan to help facilitate this. This includes budgeting, shopping and preparation of meals and undertaking basic household tasks. This enables young people to begin to prepare for their future.

Quality of care

adequate

Young people have placement plans from their placing authority. The home develops individualised home placement plans which outline the care and support young people require. Due to the limited time young people have lived at the home, these plans are being updated with relevant information as identified. The placement plans are kept under review and discussed with young people. The plans form part of the homes overall monitoring of the placement and evaluate the progress the young people make. However, the plans are not user friendly for the young people and this is an area the home's manager is developing further.

The home had previously had a period of time when there were no young people in placement. During this time, staff originally based at the home had been redeployed to other homes. Following the plans to place young people at the home, the Registered Manager has drawn together a permanent staff team to work in the home. They have worked together to ensure they provide a consistent level of care and support to young people.

Young people have their health care needs identified and supported. They have access to community based health care professionals as well as specialist health care support. This includes access to children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) as well as health care support programmes such as early break. Staff receive training regarding health promotion and medication administration. They ensure that young people who need medication administered have this undertaken by staff who follow agreed procedures and protocols to ensure safety. Attendance at education by young people has increased positively following their move to the home. Those who are on a part time educational programme have increased their attendance. This has resulted in additional courses being identified to enable them to achieve further qualifications.

Young people benefit from taking part in a range of activities enabling them to develop their interests as well as promoting their health. For example; some young people have started attending the gym to improve their overall activity, fitness levels, self- esteem and an increase in confidence.

The home is well maintained and decorated. Young people choose the décor of their bedrooms and personalise them to reflect their interests. This gives them a sense of ownership and belonging within the home and helps to motivate them to maintain the standard of décor and look after the general standard of the home. They have use of communal areas, including two lounges and a dining room leading off from the main kitchen. Externally, the home has a paved area to the front and rear of the property and is in keeping with houses within the local area.

Keeping children and young people safe **adequate**

Young people say they feel supported, safe and well cared for at the home. They say that staff take an interest in their safety and well-being and this has supported them to begin to make changes to their lifestyles to reduce some risk taking behaviours. An example of this is the significant decrease in missing from home and the involvement in bullying behaviour.

Young people have a range of people to talk with to support them with addressing concerns and previous offending behaviours. Involvement with the youth offending team has proved very positive for one young person and has enabled them to make changes to their previous behaviours which impacted not only on themselves but others.

Behaviour management plans are in place to support young people manage behaviours in a supportive and constructive manner. Rewards are used rather than negative consequences. This enables young people to focus on achieving positive outcomes and provides them with additional incentives. All staff receive training on managing behaviours. This entails using de-escalation techniques and re direction to reduce the need of physical intervention, which would only be used as a last resort to promote the safety of young people or others. Since the last inspection, there have been no physical interventions.

Risk assessments are in place for individual young people and outline the areas of risk and the measures to be implemented to manage risks. Staff at the home demonstrate an understanding of risks and implement procedures to minimise these for young people. However, some previous behaviour of young people had not been fully understood initially and this enabled one young person to let a friend access the home without the knowledge of staff. This could impact on the overall welfare of young people.

Young people benefit from a dedicated staff team who work specifically within this home. The organisation undertakes robust recruitment and selection checks prior to the commencement of employment. This ensures that only adults who have been assessed as suitable to work with young people are employed.

The Registered Manager ensures health and safety checks are conducted at the home. Fire procedures are explained to young people and staff and fire drills ensure that the procedures are followed to promote safety and welfare if young people and staff working within the home.

Leadership and management **adequate**

The home has a Registered Manager in post that has been registered to manage the home by the previous regulator of children's homes. He holds appropriate child care and management qualifications and this, along with relevant experience ensures young people are effectively supported. The Registered Manager is supported within his role by a senior residential childcare worker who is suitably qualified and experienced.

The home has had a period of non-occupancy for the previous eight months. Some of the staff team in post had previously worked at the home while the remaining staff have been redeployed from other homes in the organisation to be the core staff team for this home. This ensures the number of staff at the home can meet the needs of the current numbers of young people. The Registered Manager is confident if additional young people are placed at the home, staffing levels will reflect increased needs.

Staff benefit from regular supervision on a one to one basis as well as weekly staff meetings and peer support to undertake their role. Core training has been undertaken by all staff to ensure they have adequate training to meet the needs of young people.

The Registered Manager undertakes monthly monitoring of the home to inform practice. These link in directly with Regulation 34 quarterly reports about practice, outcomes and areas for improvement. These have been limited in detail due to the home previously being unoccupied. Independent monitoring of the home is undertaken through monthly Regulation 33 reports and these contribute to the Registered Managers overall monitoring and areas for further development.

Significant events relating to the protection, safety and welfare of young people are reported to the appropriate people, including the placing authorities and the regulator in a timely manner. Follow up to notifications demonstrate the home takes action to safeguard 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.