

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	10/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC049189
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	The Partnership of Care Today Children's Services
Registered provider address	Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, STOCKPORT, Cheshire SK2 6LR

Responsible individual	Vivien Snape
Registered manager	Dave Edwards
Inspector	Sarah Oldham

Inspection date	10/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 This home was judged requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. Since the last inspection, there has been stability in staffing at the home. There is a core team of staff who were in post at the time of the last inspection. In addition to these, the home has recruited a deputy manager and has a designated number of bank workers who provide support. They all know the young people well and work with them on a regular basis. This means that the young people receive continuity of care and support. They view these staff as members of their care team. One young person said: 'All the staff here are good. They listen to me and know how to help me. I like this home, it is the best one I have lived in and they are helping me to prepare for my future when I leave here.' The introduction of a deputy manager has enabled the manager to decrease the number of shifts he works directly with young people, enabling him to have greater oversight of the impact, progress and further development of the service. He holds weekly staff meetings which all permanent staff and bank workers attend. During these meetings, as well as discussion regarding the day-to-day running of the home, progress and outcomes for young people, there are additional discussions about practice and development. And, where there is some additional training or research, these meetings provide a forum for this. One member of staff said: 'We all work together well to provide a consistent and balanced approach in our care of the young people. This means that their lives are not overcomplicated by additional confusion of our care practice. Stability and consistency is very important and we strive to promote this at all times.' This is reflected in the daily records and the recording of sanctions and restraints, which are clearer and describe actions taken and whether any follow-up is required. Where the manager has been involved in restraints, these records are viewed and commented on by another manager working for the organisation. This provides independent oversight of the incidents and offers opportunity to reflect on practice. The manager and staff ensure effective communication between the home, placing authorities, other professionals and parents. This is positively commented on by social workers, with one saying: 'The staff are really good at keeping me updated on all aspects of the young person's care. Detailed reports are provided of any incidents as well as weekly updates which reflect clearly what has been happening.'	

The staff follow agreed procedures if he is missing from the home and ensure the emergency duty team is provided with a full and comprehensive report. They make sure he has an independent visit following any period of missing. Although the young person still has some ongoing issues, the impact the home has had on his safety, welfare and education has been significant, enabling a greater level of stability and supporting positive outcomes for him. He has an excellent relationship with staff and this is reflected in his overall engagement with the placement.'

At the time of the last inspection, some behaviour management strategies were proving ineffective, resulting in some negative behaviours within the home and the local community. The manager has spoken with neighbours who raised concerns, and reviewed how the home supports young people to manage their behaviour. Positive rewards and incentives are provided, decreasing the need for negative consequences. One young person at the home feels this is good because: 'I used to be told I was doing things wrong at the other home. Staff here make sure they tell me when I have done something well. I think that is far better.' Where there are concerns regarding negative behaviours, strategies are discussed with placing authority social workers and other professionals involved in the care of the young people. However, where the strategies implemented along with risk management plans do not sufficiently safeguard young people, the home continues an open dialogue with placing authorities to review the placement to establish whether needs can be effectively met by the home. In the event of a placement ending, staff provide young people with reassurance and support to move on to a more suitable placement. This was clearly evident within a recent disruption meeting and is reflected in the placing social worker's comments about the home and the support provided.

Staff have increased their understanding of the educational levels and outcomes for young people. Staff provide encouragement and support to enable young people to engage in their education. Where there is a delay in a personal education plan being completed, the manager follows this up with placing authorities, ensuring that dates for completion are in place. Educational attendance and engagement have improved.

The manager provides regular supervision with staff. This enables them to reflect on their practice and ensures that they have a good understanding of their role. Where there are any shortfalls, additional training and support provides them with the understanding and skills required.

The home has taken steps to address the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection, including the reporting of notifiable events. However, one event which took place outside of the home but involved one of the young people living there was not notified to the regulator. Therefore, this requirement has been raised again. The recommendations with regard to missing-from-home return interviews, recording of restraints, staff knowledge of educational outcomes and the home décor have been addressed as required.

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. The home forms part of a large social care company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/10/2016	Full	Requires improvement
18/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/08/2015	Full	Good
06/02/2015	Full	Requires improvement

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

Statutory requirement

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious (Regulation 40 (3)(e)).	31/03/2017

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 who 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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