

SC049189

Registered provider: Care Today (Children's Services) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The provider states in its statement of purpose that this home provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The home has two registered managers, who registered with Ofsted in April 2020 and April 2023.

There were three children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 September 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: 6 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/09/2022	Full	Good
25/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
16/11/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/03/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

One child has moved into the home since the last inspection. Children's plans for moving in and out of the home have been well thought out and children have been well prepared. This means that children's experiences when moving have been positive.

Two children went on a holiday to Blackpool in the summer holidays. They took part in lots of activities and enjoyed themselves. Children also enjoy different activities with staff, including going to escape rooms and the cinema, playing pool and even climbing Mount Snowdon.

Two children are engaged in education and are making good progress. One child was awarded 'student of the year'. For one child, attending education has been difficult. The staff have worked hard with the child and others to find a suitable education package. This has been unsuccessful. However, the staff team has supported the child to develop their independence skills and prepare them for their future as they prepare to move on from the home and into adulthood.

Staff provide a nurturing environment for children and are focused on supporting children to make progress and develop skills. One parent said, '[Name of child] has grown up a lot. It goes to show that, with the right support, anyone's life can change.' One child is now able to engage with therapy to support them with their emotional well-being, something that they were previously not ready for. This means that children are receiving effective support from the staff.

Children's bedrooms are personalised. Some areas of the home are warm and welcoming and there are photos of the children around the home. However, practice in relation to some aspects of the home is dated, including referring to bedrooms with numbers, the use of a noticeboard in the dining room and locks on doors.

Children are in good health and staff ensure that children attend the appointments they need to maintain this. However, one child who is prescribed glasses is not encouraged to wear these as they should.

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

There has been a significant reduction in episodes of children going missing from home. One child said that this is due to them being allowed to have overnight stays with friends. This means that children are listened to and staff advocate appropriately to reduce the risk.

When children are missing, staff actively look for them and work with others. They encourage children in a supportive way to return home. The staff team reviews

incidents together. However, the managers do not evaluate records so that they can identify any issues with staff practice.

There has been one allegation made by a child. This allegation was managed appropriately and all professionals were informed. The staff understand the safeguarding procedures well. This means that children are kept safe.

There have been two complaints made by children. These have been addressed swiftly. Children are comfortable to raise any concerns that they have and feel assured that they are listened to.

There have been no restraints used by the staff and the use of consequences is rare. The staff prefer to use a positive approach to behaviour support, which is successful.

The managers follow safer recruitment processes, which means that only those suitable to work with children are doing so.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by two experienced and suitably qualified managers. The managers are strong advocates for the children and are confident in escalating their concerns and challenging other professionals in the best interests of the children.

The staff team is committed to the children and has remained consistent. Managers do not use agency staff. However, rotas do not identify the full names of staff and their hours worked, including the manager's hours. This does not meet regulation.

The staff say they feel supported by the managers and that supervision and training are useful. Managers ensure that the staff have the training they need to meet the individual needs of the children and encourage staff to update others in the team on any relevant training they have attended.

Team meetings take place weekly. These are child-focused, which means that staff always have the most up-to-date information needed to care for the children.

The managers have good professional relationships with other agencies and they understand their roles and responsibilities with regards to the children. However, the managers do not include feedback from professionals, children or other stakeholders in their review of the quality of care. This is a missed opportunity to reflect and make continued improvements.

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 registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; 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 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) This relates specifically to the removal of locks on external doors.	26 October 2023
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(b)(c))	26 October 2023

This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that the views of children, social workers and other stakeholders are considered in the review of the quality of care.	
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)) The provider needs to ensure that the full names of all staff, including the manager, and their actual hours worked are recorded on the rota.	26 October 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a homely, domestic environment. The home 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 incidents of children going missing should be 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 staff encourage children to take a proactive role in looking after their day-to-day health and well-being. Where children have specific health needs or conditions, they should be supported to manage these, subject to their age and understanding. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.10)

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: SC049189

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Today (Children's Services) Limited

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 6LR

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered managers: Danielle Leacock and Stephen Abraham

Inspector

Kerri Lynch, Social Care Inspector

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