

SC049189

Registered provider: The Partnership of Care Today

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The provider states in their statement of purpose that this home provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities. The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2020.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 November 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 4 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2020	Full	Good
19/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
16/07/2018	Full	Good
29/01/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children are encouraged to build relationships with adults who they can trust. One child, who has recently moved on after living at the home for a few years, told the inspector that his relationships with the staff were the main reason that he enjoyed living there. Children engage in a range of activities. Staff take an interest in each child's interests and hobbies, then make efforts to give children experiences they will enjoy.

A number of children have moved into and out of the home since the last inspection. Unfortunately, children have not always moved out in line with their plans. The manager and staff have worked hard to reflect on the decisions made and have become more thorough in their efforts to seek holistic information before a child moves in. This has included good multi-agency working. However, one child has recently moved in prior to receiving the consents and relevant plans required to ensure that he can be cared for safely.

Children are supported with their education. One child was able to leave the home with a place secured on an apprenticeship. He has excelled in education more than anyone in his family has previously. This opens up his opportunities for the future and is something he is very proud of.

It is unclear if children have personalised routines in line with their needs. This has the potential for children to receive inconsistent care. The lack of personalised routines can reduce the opportunities for children to feel secure. This also extends to a lack of planning around independence skills, as a framework has not been used to review the life skills that children currently have or need to develop in the future. This reduces the chances of children being fully prepared for adult life.

Some areas of the home are damaged or in need of modernisation. Although some maintenance has been completed, more is needed to ensure that children live in a comfortable, homely environment. Children have moved into the home before historical damage has been repaired properly. This means that children are less likely to feel relaxed.

Children are helped to build relationships with their families. Staff are vigilant and share any concerns with relevant people when necessary. When children have returned to live with their family, staff have kept in touch to see how the children and the parents are adjusting to the change.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children are protected from harm. Staff work with other agencies to share information and act upon it. Allegations have been reported in line with safeguarding protocols and managers have informed the regulator. This meets both of the previous requirements.

Staff know the contents of children's risk management plans. However, they do not always take swift action when children go missing from the home. Some of the risk management plans also lack detail about the expectations for staff. For example, risk management plans for children who have threatened to self-harm do not include clear information about how often to monitor the children and when to seek medical advice. This has not yet had an impact on the children but has the potential to do so.

Positive behaviour is promoted. The team meets regularly to evaluate whether children's incentive plans and consequences are working to change behaviour. When it is identified that they are not, the team is flexible in adapting the plans in the best interest of the children. This means that children are more likely to engage.

Complaints are responded to appropriately. Due to a number of incidents in the local area involving children, relationships with the neighbours have at times been strained. Staff and managers make efforts to ensure that any complaints from neighbours are listened to and acted on quickly.

The manager has also reviewed the location of the home and crimes in the area. She has started to use information from the police to assess which children may or may not benefit from moving to the area. As a result, children moving in are now less likely to be criminalised or at risk of harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She has successfully registered with Ofsted since the last inspection. Staff, children's families and other professionals who work with the children are happy with the communication from the manager and staff.

The manager has worked hard to embed more reflective practice. Staff regularly use a model of reflection to review how they feel after a difficult event. When managers have been involved in physical interventions, independent managers have also ensured that the manager is able to reflect. However, evaluations of records vary in quality and do not always identify some of the necessary next steps.

Weekly team meetings take place. Staff value the opportunity to share information regularly sharing information. Staff are also encouraged to research different topics relevant to the needs of the children in the home. However, records and evidence of the learning and reflection within the team, and how this research has an impact on the care of the children, are limited.

Children are encouraged to meet with staff regularly to share their views. Although it is evident that some requests are implemented, staff and managers are not consistently responding to children's requests. There is no evidence of management oversight or evaluation of the children's meetings or key-working sessions. Consequently, there have been times when children have suggested ideas that have not been considered.

The manager completes monthly audits that then inform her review of the quality of care. An independent person also completes monthly visits to the home. The manager reviews and takes action to address the recommendations made. The manager is also working to develop the leadership skills of other staff members within the team. This proactive development means that the children are more likely to benefit from experienced and knowledgeable staff.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)) This relates specifically to ensuring that the home environment is maintained and modernised.	31 December 2021
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;	31 December 2021

take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)) This relates specifically to ensuring that risk management plans include clear strategies for staff regarding when to seek medical advice and the monitoring arrangements for children at risk of self-harming. This also relates to staff being consistent, persistent and acting without delay in their efforts to locate children who go missing from the home.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; that each child's relevant plans are followed; that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(iii)(c)(f)) This relates specifically to managers ensuring that they have sufficient information before making decisions about who moves into the home in order to reduce the impact on children living in the home. This also relates to the children having personalised routines that are in line with their needs and understanding. Records	31 December 2021

should also be written in a way that is accessible to the children.

This relates to embedding a framework to help children celebrate the life skills that they have developed and focus on the skills that they need to gain in the future.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- The registered person should review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

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: The Partnership of Care Today

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

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Danielle Leacock

Inspector

Sylvia Eboigbe, Social Care Inspector

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