

SC356318

Registered provider: The Partnership of Care Today

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A large private provider operates this home. The home is registered to provide care for up to 2 children who have experienced childhood instability, resulting in trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2024. She holds the relevant level 5 qualification.

There were no children living at the home at the time of this inspection. Two children have moved into the home, and 3 children have moved out of the home since the last inspection.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 March 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 9 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/12/2024	Full	Good
11/03/2024	Full	Good
14/02/2023	Full	Good
25/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children's safety and overall experiences have been impacted by poor, ineffective care planning and shortfalls in safeguarding practice.

Children's moves into the home have not been well assessed. A decision to move one child into the home was made without full consideration of children's risks and vulnerabilities. As result, staff were unable to respond to the child's risks and emotional challenges. This had a significant impact on the child's stability as he had to move from the home in an unplanned way.

One child, who had lived in the home for over 2 years, had made significant progress and built trusting relationships with staff. However, managers failed to adequately consider how the introduction of another child would impact a child who had lived alone for 2 years. As a result, his emotional wellbeing declined and his level of risk increased. This contributed to a decision that the child could no longer remain in the home. An external professional said that the child had experienced emotional distress and their feelings had not been appropriately considered. The child has continued to experience an unsettled journey since leaving the home.

Children's education is impacted by frequent changes in the home's dynamics. Children do not experience the continuity and stability they need to make sustained educational progress. While children are encouraged to attend education, staff have not been successful in ensuring that children's attendance is consistent.

While children's stability has been impacted because of poor decision-making, the manager and staff work hard to help children have positive moves in and out of the home. Children are provided with opportunities to visit the home before they move in. When a decision was reached for one child to return to the care of their parents, they experienced a well-planned and positive transition.

Staff regularly consult with children through house meetings and general discussions. One child's interest in cars was promoted through a shared interest with a member of staff. Since the last inspection, children have enjoyed holidays to the seaside. Despite challenges, children have benefited from some positive experiences.

Children are encouraged to maintain meaningful connections with those who matter most to them. These efforts help children to preserve important relationships and stay connected to their personal histories.

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

When children's needs and risks increased and changed, leaders and managers failed to review lone-working arrangements for staff. As a result, staff did not have the support

they needed to manage children's risks effectively. Preventable incidents happened, which left children at risk of harm. For example, on one occasion, a staff member locked themselves in an office during an incident. Insufficient staffing ratios led to the staff member being unable to de-escalate the situation. As a result, children caused significant damage to the home, presenting risk to both themselves and others.

Leaders do not embed a positive safeguarding culture that promotes the welfare of children. For example, children's risk plans are not always followed and staff spoken to during the inspection did not fully understand the role of the local authority designated officer.

Despite staff lone working during the night and risks increasing when a child with complex needs moved into the home, managers failed to review the safety of children and the staff caring for them. Senior leaders and managers delayed taking action to implement additional staffing for a 10-day period. The manager stated that this was due to issues associated with funding. This increased the risk of harm to children.

Children's safety is compromised because managers fail to apply professional curiosity when there are early indicators of harm. While managers take appropriate action when it is clear that an allegation of harm is made, they miss opportunities to explore and address risk when potential allegations are made. As a result, it is not clear what action has been taken to ensure that children have not been harmed and that any staff practice concerns are promptly addressed.

When children go missing from home, staff take effective action. Information is shared appropriately with safeguarding professionals. Staff take the time to explore the reasons why children go missing from home and return home interviews are completed.

Restraint is used proportionately and only when necessary to prevent harm. However, escalation techniques are not always clearly evidenced in incident reports. This limits the manager's ability to effectively evaluate whether staff consistently apply proactive and preventative strategies before resorting to restrictive measures.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Senior leaders and managers do not have sufficient oversight of the service and do not monitor the home effectively. Oversight of serious and significant incidents is ineffective. Managers do not use professional curiosity or critical reflection, and safeguarding information is not always followed up. As a result, managers have not identified shortfalls in safeguarding practice and addressed these at the earliest opportunity.

Although the manager has disagreed with decisions made in her absence, she has failed to challenge these decisions. Shortfalls in professional challenge reduce the manager's ability to ensure safe practice within the home. In addition, the manager has not notified Ofsted of all serious incidents. This has reduced external oversight and opportunities to address shortfalls in practice at an earlier stage.

Staff receive regular supervision and are up to date with their mandatory training. However, they do not yet demonstrate the experience or practical application of this learning in their day-to-day practice with children. The manager has been implementing reflective practice to improve consistency and support the staff team to explore children's challenges in the context of their experiences. Despite this, this is not yet helping to prevent serious shortfalls from occurring.

Independent monitoring is ineffective. Significant shortfalls in practice, including issues relating to safeguarding oversight and competence, have not been recognised or challenged through independent monitoring processes. As a result, leaders have missed opportunities for external scrutiny that could have strengthened practice and supported children's safety.

Children's family members and social workers were spoken to as part of this inspection. They have shared positive feedback about professional relationships and the quality of communication.

As a result of this inspection, Ofsted has issued a compliance notice requiring leaders and managers to take urgent action to protect children and operate the home effectively. Ofsted will continue to monitor this home.

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 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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) In particular, ensure that managers and staff fully understand and possess the skills needed to protect children effectively, and know the appropriate actions to take when a child is at risk of harm.	26 April 2026
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.	26 April 2026

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, ensure that managers and staff are provided with sufficient training and have the skills to meet children's needs, that there are effective systems to evaluate the quality of care and that monitoring systems are effective in identifying where practice should improve.	
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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, ensure that children's risks and vulnerabilities are fully considered before they move into the home. In addition, ensure that any risks can be managed safely.	26 April 2026
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust;	26 April 2026

an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

that staff—

meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;

help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;

encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

strive to gain each child's respect and trust;

understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;

are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same;

de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children;

that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others.

(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)

(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)(b))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are supported to build trusting relationships with children, understand children's needs and behaviours, and help children to develop positive relationships with others.

The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	26 April 2026
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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: SC356318

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Registered manager: Jade Dutton

Inspectors

Natasha Skinner, Social Care Inspector
Nus Bibi, Social Care Inspector

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