

SC356318

Registered provider: The Partnership of Care Today Children's Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A large provider of children's services operates this home. The home provides care and accommodation for up to two young people who have experienced childhood instability, resulting in trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2018.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 15 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2019	Full	Outstanding
27/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/12/2017	Full	Good
09/03/2017	Full	Requires improvement

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

Recommendations

- All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

In particular, ensure that internal plans reflect the progress of each child. In addition, ensure that key-work sessions provide children with targeted support in line with their needs.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive exceptionally nurturing care from a committed and passionate staff team. This helps them to form strong and secure relationships and settle quickly. Staff know children extremely well. They use both this knowledge and their intuition to provide highly individualised care. As a result, children make significant progress, considering their starting points.

Staff involve children in decisions about their day-to-day care. Frequent meetings and consultations allow children to choose their activities and menus and have their say about what is working well at the home and what could be done to make things even better for them. Meetings are enjoyable and informative. For example, staff encourage children to draw pictures of their preferred activities. Children also play a role in more complex aspects of their care. This includes making decisions about their next home or planning time with family members. This inclusive approach provides children with a sense of ownership of their care.

One child has excellent attendance at school. She is making considerable social, emotional and academic progress. For example, a teacher told the inspector that the child is now forming friendships and is increasingly confident. Staff work closely with teachers to share important information. This collaborative practice ensures that the child's progress is sustained. Another child recently moved into the home. Staff are working hard to provide him with daily educational activities until his formal school placement commences. The registered manager and staff place a high importance on education and aspiration. This encourages children to invest in their learning, develop aspirations and work towards reaching their potential.

Children enjoy a comprehensive range of activities and experiences. This includes trips to the cinema and local parks. Staff encourage children to develop interests and hobbies. For example, one child is a member of local gymnastic and swimming clubs. Another child is a member of a local football team. Staff support children to develop friendships. A child's friend is a regular visitor to the home. This highly nurturing and personalised approach supports children to rebuild their self-esteem and sense of identity. In addition, they enjoy ordinary childhood experiences.

Staff understand the importance of children's relationships with their family. They work hard to develop strong working relationships with parents and carers. For example, staff arranged a surprise visit for a child to spend time with her mother on Christmas Eve. This excellent practice reduces children's sense of isolation and helps them to make significant progress. A parent told the inspector: 'She [child] is doing absolutely brilliantly. She looks so much better, she is happy and healthy. When I need to speak to staff, they are there for me. I cannot fault them.'

The home environment is child-friendly and has a homely and nurturing feel. Children's bedrooms are personalised and decorated with their favourite colours and interests in

mind. A staff member designed and decorated a chair in the theme of a child's favourite cartoon character. This individual approach is indicative of the passion that staff feel for children in their care. As a result, children feel proud of their home and invest in it.

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

Relationships between children and staff are exceptionally positive and secure. This ensures that children feel settled and safe. Staff use these strong relationship dynamics to provide an open and reflective home environment. They offer children continual guidance and encourage them to learn from challenging incidents. As a result, children use new strategies to help them to settle when they are anxious or distressed.

Individualised and up-to-date risk assessments contain clear guidance for staff to follow to manage risk. Staff use their excellent knowledge of children to manage challenges and risks as they arise. They work collectively with key safeguarding agencies to share important information. Staff use this information to inform risk assessments, which capture current and potential risks. The diligent and sensitive staff act quickly on information that is of concern. This coordinated approach promotes children's safety and welfare.

The exceptionally nurturing environment provides children with a strong foundation from which to address their challenging behaviour. Staff provide children with excellent structure and routine. They frequently reward them for positive behaviour. Children thrive in this positive environment. As a result, they make significant and sustained progress in reducing their risk-taking behaviour.

The child living at the home during the previous inspection has moved on. At times, her challenging behaviour escalated and exposed her to a high risk of harm. The registered manager and staff managed this well and worked hard to keep her safe. They searched the local area and visited known addresses when she went missing from the home. Staff worked tirelessly with the police and social workers to disrupt the child's risk-taking activity in the local community. They provided the child with significant support to understand how her behaviours might be harmful to herself and others. This proactive and robust approach to care and to safeguarding helps to keep children safe.

Staff are confident in their use of de-escalation techniques and they proactively manage any negative behaviours. On rare occasions, staff use minimal restraint to keep children safe. The records of these incidents are detailed. The registered manager ensures that staff and children have opportunities to reflect on and learn from these events. As a result, incidents of challenging behaviour reduce significantly over time.

The registered manager takes effective action when concerns about children's welfare or staff practice arise. He shares information with key safeguarding partners in a timely manner. As a result, investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are transparent and managed fairly. This robust approach reassures children and helps to keep them safe.

The registered manager ensures that the home environment is safe. He involves children in regular fire drills. All health and safety checks are completed in a timely manner. The

registered manager is aware of the potential risks that children may be exposed to in the local community. He ensures that the home's location risk assessment clearly reflects these risks and how they should be managed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is aspirational, child-focused and ambitious for the children in his care. This ethos inspires staff to deliver exceptional care. Staff enjoy their role and are passionate about the children whom they care for. They continually reflect on their practice to improve children's day-to-day experiences.

The registered manager has significantly reflected on the impact of community-based risks. This has historically resulted in teenage children becoming involved in antisocial behaviour and placing themselves at risk. As a result, the registered manager has decided to admit younger children. He has worked closely with staff to ensure that the care that they provide meets the needs of this age group. This means that staff practice has continued to evolve. Children now play a safe and active role in their local community and feel settled.

The staff team is diverse and has an excellent mix of experience and skills. Staff are positive role models for children and offer them a range of expertise. In addition, the registered manager uses independent research to continually improve and evolve staff practice. As a result, children receive highly individualised care that helps them to make significant progress.

The registered manager has effective monitoring systems in place. He completes monthly reports which scrutinise key aspects of children's care. The registered manager has a strong understanding of the home's strengths and areas of development. His innovative approach means that he is continually improving the experiences and quality of the care that children receive. For example, he is working alongside the home's therapist to embed new and creative methods to involve children in their care.

A healthy learning environment ensures that staff have access to a comprehensive training programme. The registered manager is keen to develop staff and challenge their practice. Some staff complete individual development programmes and are undertaking management qualifications. Other staff benefit from internal promotion or take lead responsibility for aspects of children's care. This aspirational ethos inspires staff to deliver high-quality care.

Staff develop excellent working relationships with a number of agencies. The registered manager is tenacious and will not accept shortfalls in children's care. He continually escalates his concerns when shortfalls arise. This determined and collaborative approach means that children receive timely support, in line with their needs. A social worker told the inspector: 'Their [staff] communication is excellent. This has helped the child to settle. It has been a really positive move for him.'

Children's plans are highly individualised and in line with their needs. The registered manager uses his strong knowledge of children's progress to continually update their plans. However, the quality of some key-work sessions is variable. The registered manager is planning to significantly improve this aspect of staff practice.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Andrew Beechey

Inspector

Gareth Leckey, social care inspector

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