

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 national provider of children's services operates this home. Ofsted has registered the home to provide care for up to two children who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Since the last inspection, a new manager has taken over the day-to-day running of the home and has applied to Ofsted to become registered.

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: 25 and 26 January 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
15/01/2019	Full	Outstanding
27/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/12/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Two children have lived at the home for two years. This stability helps them to feel settled and contributes to them making good progress. Children have positive relationships with staff, who are nurturing towards them.

Both children attend school daily and are making progress with their learning. Staff are supporting one child to prepare for the transition to high school. The child has been to visit the school and speaks positively about their education plan. Staff provide incentives to children and reward educational achievements.

Staff consider children's wishes when supporting them to keep in touch with people who are important to them. As a result, children have more opportunities to spend time with people they care about.

Children enjoy participating in a range of activities with staff support. They are members of a swimming and gymnastics club. These activities promote children's physical health and provide more opportunities for them to develop good social skills.

Managers and staff have received several compliments from external professionals visiting children about the progress children make and the friendliness of staff. Positive feedback reflects the confidence that those involved with the children generally have in the quality of care provided to children.

Both children are healthy. Staff ensure that children are registered with local health services and attend routine health appointments. Staff do not always record outcomes of children's appointments clearly. This means that some staff do not have up-to-date information about children's health.

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

Children have not raised any concerns about staff. They value their relationships and can talk to them about things that are worrying them. This helps children to feel safe and well supported.

Children and staff meet together each week to talk about things that are important to them. During these meetings, staff help children to reflect on their week and set targets for the week ahead. Staff support children to name behaviours and emotions and think about how these might affect others. This helps children to develop socially acceptable behaviours and manage conflicts between each other.

Staff are trained well in safeguarding practices. Children do not go missing from home and there are no concerns about child exploitation. Managers ensure that

there are safe systems in place to protect children from harm when they access the internet, which is always supervised by staff. This helps to keep children safe.

Managers ensure that all staff are safely recruited. Recruitment checks are thorough, with gaps in employment explored, employment references verified and Disclosure and Barring Service checks obtained before new staff start working at the home. This good practice reduces the risk of children being cared for by unsuitable individuals.

Staff use praise and rewards to promote positive behaviours. Occasionally, sanctions are implemented to help children to recognise behaviours that are not acceptable. Records of sanctions are not always clear, for example, one record advised that the child had to go to bed early, however, the time was not noted. The lack of information does not help to evaluate if the measure was proportionate. In addition, the manager monitors sanctions once a month. This delay has the potential for unauthorised measures to be used by staff.

Occasionally, staff restrain children to prevent harm to a person or significant damage to property. Records do not always provide a clear description of the incident and the techniques used by staff. Managers do ensure that children and staff have an opportunity to reflect on incidents that happen. However, on one occasion, there was conflicting information between a written record and information shared in the debrief. This was not clarified by the manager. These are missed opportunities to ensure that incidents are fully evaluated and that learning informs staff about the most effective methods of supporting children at the most difficult times.

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

Managers have systems in place to monitor the quality of care provided to children, however, these are not always effective. For example, weekly checks are completed on medication stored in the home. These checks do not include the required review of whether medication is stored at the correct temperature and that medication that is no longer used is disposed of. While this has not had a direct impact on children's health to date, it has the potential to do so.

Records kept in the home are not always well monitored by managers. For example, incident reports lack careful evaluation to enable managers to identify and address any practice issues. In addition, although a complaint received from a parent has been resolved, there is no clear record of the complaint, action taken or the outcome, to reflect this. This practice does not promote a culture of learning from feedback.

Staff do not receive regular supervision in line with the organisation's policy and supervision records lack detail about topics discussed. This does not fully support staff's learning and development.

Since the last inspection, two managers have left. A new manager recently joined the team. She has started to establish positive relationships with professionals. However, children's parents have not yet been made aware of her role in the home.

Children are cared for by consistent staff who are qualified and experienced. The manager ensures that staff have access to regular job-specific training. However, training needs have not been assessed against all the needs of children living in the home. As a result, some training that would help staff to further understand children's experiences has not been undertaken.

The new manager has a good understanding of children's plans and a clear vision for the home. She understands the strengths and areas that need to be developed. For example, some repairs need to be carried out in the home and work to improve the physical environment has already started.

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, 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 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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) This relates to the manager ensuring that there are effective monitoring systems in place to monitor the quality of care provided, and that actions identified are completed without delay. This includes ensuring that incidents are evaluated thoroughly and a record is kept of all complaints, the action taken and outcome.	18 April 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)) In particular, the manager supervises all staff at regular intervals as detailed in the organisation's policy.	18 April 2022
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(b))	18 April 2022

In particular, the manager should ensure that children's health records are kept up to date.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. In particular, the manager should identify staff training needs, to support them to care for the children who live in the home, and this training should be completed by staff without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure that the home meets children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. This specifically relates to repairing damaged or worn furnishings without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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: The Partnership of Care Today

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

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Helen Malanaphy, Social Care Inspector

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