

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC005045
Inspector	Matthew Hedges
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Care Today (Children's Services) Ltd
Registered person address	Care Today Children's Services, Lansdowne House 85 Buxton Road STOCKPORT Cheshire SK2 6LR
Responsible individual	Vivien Anne Snape
Registered manager	Gillian Hesp
Date of last inspection	27/03/2014

Inspection date	18/09/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people make good progress in relation to their starting points. This is supported by effective, high quality support from staff and a knowledgeable, experienced Registered Manager. Staff treat young people as individuals and are clearly committed to ensuring they develop their skills and abilities. This ensures that young people are well prepared for adult life.

Leadership arrangements are strong and the Registered Manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home. This supports staff and continues to drive improvement. The Registered Manager has high aspirations for the service and the young people it supports.

Young people's views are sought and clearly influence the running of the home.

Staff are well trained and work hard to make sure that young people are safe. This is particularly evident in the support offered to young people regarding safe relationships and going missing. Young people confirm that they feel safe. A range of professionals also highlight this as a particular strength of the home.

Two shortfalls have been identified at this inspection. The home's Statement of Purpose does not accurately describe the therapeutic support available to the home.

In addition, restraint records do not always record the duration of the restraint. The impact of these shortfalls on young people is minimal.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is one of several homes operated by an independent provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/03/2014	Interim	good progress
03/07/2013	Full	good
15/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
26/06/2012	Full	good

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its Statement of Purpose (Regulation 4 (6))	03/11/2014
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include the duration of the measure of restraint. (Regulation 17B (4) (a))	03/11/2014

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people generally make good progress in key areas of their lives. One social worker commented that they had seen, 'huge improvements' in a young person who 'now has aspirations'.

Most young people's attendance at school has significantly improved. For example, a professional commented that one young person's attendance had gone from 10% to 80% following their admission to the home. This has led to significant academic achievements and all celebrated. This ensures that the young people develop a positive self-view and their self-confidence improves. This has also had a positive impact on young people's relationships with their families.

Young people benefit from well planned and regular contact with people important to them. They maintain strong links to their home and families. This ensures that the young people understand their background and maintain a sense of belonging. In some cases young people have returned to live with members of their family. This has been possible because of the improvements that have been made whilst at the home.

Young people's physical health is good and in some cases has dramatically improved while living at the home. Young people have an understanding of healthy living and risk taking behaviours such as drug and alcohol use reduce. When some young people moved to the home they were reluctant to engage with any health professionals. Their confidence in this area has now significantly increased and young people are more confident to attend appointments. This empowers young people to take responsibility for their own health needs which will ensure that their chances of staying healthy are maximised as they grow into adulthood.

Young people's independence skills have improved. Young people often cook for themselves and are encouraged to do other household tasks such as shopping. Alongside this, young people develop their awareness of the risks that can occur with increasing independence. This is particularly true in relation to relationships. This ensures that young people are well prepared for adult life and that they are safer in their relationships.

Quality of care **good**

Staff are openly concerned about young people's welfare. This helps to foster good relationships based on trust. Staff understand the importance of relationships when supporting the young people. The young people comment positively on the home

and the relationships that exist. One young person particularly appreciated the 'calmness' of the home. Staff also work effectively to support the young people's families, particularly when they are returning to live at home. One parent stated staff have been 'lifesavers' for them.

Positive relationships are further developed through a range of activities. Staff talk passionately about the importance of spending time with the young people. Activities are varied and reflect young people's interests. Staff also ensure that activities are often educational. They also identify learning opportunities throughout day-to-day life. This furthers young people's learning and confidence in more relaxed 'real-life' situations.

Staff are committed to supporting young people's education. They understand the importance of this for young people in later life. Staff regularly attend education placements with young people and will stay with them throughout the day if required. Achievements are celebrated and this supports young people's increasing belief in their own ability. One professional commented that, 'Staff work tirelessly, by liaising with local schools and training providers to establish appropriate education packages'. Young people are also supported to access the home's training programme. Undertaking training alongside staff further develops positive relationships. It also equips young people with valuable knowledge in key areas including first aid, food hygiene and medication.

Young people are involved in the running of the home. Their views are sought on key issues affecting their life. This ensures young people develop a sense of ownership of the home. It also improves their self-confidence and gives them a sense of control over their lives. Young people know how to make a complaint and are empowered to understand their rights. For example, young people have been encouraged to set up their own files with useful information. This includes national guidance relating to children's homes and what young people can expect from staff and managers. This ensures young people feel valued and their views are respected.

Care plans are individualised and are regularly reviewed. The home has introduced a new format for this that seeks to highlight young people's progress more clearly. The Registered Manager is committed to continuing the development of the plans. This further helps to highlight and celebrate young people's achievements.

Staff work hard to ensure that young people have access to all of the support services that they need. Staff ensure regular reviews occur and challenge placing authorities when needed.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people are safe and say that they feel safe.

Some young people do go missing but the number of incidents has reduced since coming to live at the home. Staff respond well when young people go missing and work closely with other agencies including the police. A police officer stated that, 'Missing from home episodes have massively decreased'. He felt that this was due to the work of the Registered Manager and the staff team. In particular he highlighted the positive relationships that exist between staff and young people. The police officer also felt that the close working relationship that they have with the home has, 'Improved young people's view of the police'.

The Registered Manager has an excellent understanding of child sexual exploitation (CSE). She ensures that staff are highly aware of CSE and identify risks in this area. This protects young people from harm. Young people are also supported, where appropriate, to access specific support in this area. A number of young people have also completed courses regarding CSE. This helps to raise their awareness and keep them safe. Police officers, social workers and youth offending professionals highlight this as a strength of the home.

Risk assessments and care plans are individualised. They clearly identify risks and protective factors and are regularly monitored and reviewed.

The staff team sensitively manages incidents where young people are distressed, including incidents of self-harm. Additional training is provided when required which further supports this. The Registered Manager ensures that the placing authority holds regular reviews and that all family members and relevant professional are involved. When young people are distressed, staff work hard to ensure that the impact on other young people is minimised. Neither staff or young people identify bullying as a problem at the home.

Several young people have moved into the home since the last inspection. This has caused some unsettled behaviour. Staff have managed this well. Although sanctions are sometimes used, these are proportionate. The home focuses primarily on supporting young people through positive rewards. This ensures that positive behaviour is highlighted and celebrated. This improves young people's behaviour and further develops their self-esteem and sense of achievement. Restraint is rarely used and only when a young person is at risk of harm. Records are mainly well recorded but do not always record the duration of each restraint.

A robust recruitment and selection process is in place overseen by the Registered Manager. This ensures that unsafe adults are not employed at the home.

Leadership and management

good

The home is well managed by an experienced and effective Registered Manager. The manager has been in post since August 2012. She is suitably qualified having recently completed the Level 5 Diploma in Health and Social Care and Children and Young People's Services. The Registered Manager keeps up to date with changes to legislation and guidance. This knowledge is shared with the staff team and this supports developments within the home.

The Registered Manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and is committed to driving improvement. The homes development plan outlines key targets and actions required. There are no reoccurring shortfalls from previous inspections.

The Registered Manager monitors the effectiveness of the home regularly. An independent person also visits the home each month. Reports are produced following these visits meet statutory requirements.

The homes Statement of Purpose does not accurately reflect the services offered to the young people. Specifically this relates to the amount of 'in house therapeutic support' that is available. The Statement of Purpose notes 'a team of therapists'. However this relates to the provider as a whole and is not available in this specific home. The impact of this has been minimised by the efforts of the Registered Manager to secure alternative services. A social worker commented that the home 'does all they can for young people' and are clear about the services offered.

The Registered Manager understands the importance of a well-trained and well-supported staff team. Staff talk positively about the supervision and support they receive from the Registered Manager and feel that this helps them to support young people better. Training is robust and develops staff's skills quickly. This is particularly evident in relation to safeguarding. Recent recruitment has taken place and the Registered Manager carefully considers the needs of the young people when recruiting staff. This includes issues regarding the balance of male and female staff to ensure positive role models.

Complaints are dealt with effectively by the Registered Manager and are well recorded. Notifications of serious incidents are sent to Ofsted and all relevant professionals are informed. These are detailed and well written. The home takes appropriate action following incidents of concern and notifications evidence effective joint working with other agencies.

The home is clean, well maintained and decorated. Young people have helped staff to decorate the lounge and other communal areas as well as their own bedrooms. This ensures young people feel comfortable and have a sense of belonging in the home. Staff and young people take pride in the home and damage to the property is rare. Health and safety requirements are met and maintenance issues are dealt with in a timely way.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.