

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	21/12/2015
Unique reference number	SC005045
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	The Partnership of Care Today Children's Services
Registered person address	Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, STOCKPORT, Cheshire, SK2 6LR

Responsible individual	Vivien Snape
Registered manager	Emma Coen
Inspector	David Morgan

Inspection date	21/12/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC005045

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The manager is well organised and provides effective supervision of her team.
- Young people usually make good progress.
- Staff members are highly motivated, child-centred and establish trusting relationships with young people.
- In most regards, young people's progress is carefully tracked and the support they receive adapted accordingly.
- Young people make good use of community resources.
- Young people learn to keep themselves safe and pursue constructive lifestyles.
- This inspection makes four requirements and three recommendations to, for example, improve the use of monitoring exercises, pursue local authorities more rigorously for information, and make improvements to the statement of purpose and staff training.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met</p> <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>(c) if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. This is with regard to the attempts to obtain relevant documents from local authorities being as rigorous as possible.</p>	01/02/2016
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must –</p> <p>(2)(g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>(i) research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and</p> <p>(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. This is with regard to learning from incidents such as disruptions and placement breakdowns.</p>	01/02/2016
<p>Keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. This is with regard to the manager ensuring the statement of purpose reflects current practices in the home. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))</p>	01/02/2016
<p>Include in the statement of purpose a description of the home's policy and approach in relation to children's rights. This is with</p>	01/02/2016

regard to describing what rights children have. (Regulation 16, schedule 1, section 9(b))	
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Seek to make the fullest contribution to the pathway planning process. This is with regard to using a clear procedure to support children's independence needs. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 17, paragraph 3.28)
- Ensure there is a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should detail any further training required for those staff to enable the delivery of the homes statement of purpose. This is with regard to providing training on radicalisation and the responsibility of staff to report female genital mutilation. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- Make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. The registered person should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 55, paragraph 10.24)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a large private company. It provides up to two beds for children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and is located in an urban area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/09/2014	CH - Full	Good
27/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
03/07/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
<p>Young people benefit substantially from living in the home. They make secure relationships with staff and find these of benefit when dealing with personal difficulties. One young person said, 'They help me when I'm down'. Young people are consulted well by staff and this contributes to young people feeling settled. Since the last inspection, young people have made no complaints. As a result, they make clear progress especially over longer periods of time. This is particularly evident when young people have used the range of services on offer by the organisation, including the positive intervention programme, which provides closer supervision. Older individuals progress to independence pathways that assist them to make smooth transitions to other settings.</p> <p>The number and intensity of difficulties faced by the majority of young people falls markedly as they settle into the home. The firm day-to-day routines mean they learn to keep themselves safe and undertake constructive sporting and recreational activities in the community. Young people make valuable friendships locally. A small number find they need additional support and move elsewhere. Since the last inspection, the manager has implemented tighter admission processes. Young people often experience planned admissions and they all receive effective inductions into the home. As a result, they understand the expectations that staff have of them. These processes serve to ensure that new young people feel safe and integrate as well as possible into the existing group. This also allows the more established residents to demonstrate their maturity and perpetuate the positive culture of the home. Young people feel the service is as good as it could be. One wrote, 'The house is good; my main carer is brilliant!'</p> <p>Young people benefit from reasonable opportunities to learn and practice independence skills, including budgeting and cooking. This takes into account their cultural and religious needs. However, the coordination and planning is not as strong as possible. Staff seek direction and documentation from placing authorities but this process is not sufficiently robust and unnecessarily long delays occur. Also, the independence training by key workers does not follow a prescribed course to show when young people have learnt new skills and which other targets they are addressing. This means their progress in some areas is less rapid than possible.</p> <p>Part of young people's good progress is the noticeable emotional resilience they achieve. This is now more evident because of the comprehensive tracking documents that are in use. In most cases, these serve to identify and monitor the key issues for each young person. Young people learn from their key workers to</p>	

set achievable ambitions for themselves and to make alternative plans, in case difficulties arise. They learn to manage their own health, for example by ceasing to take illicit drugs and managing their own prescribed medication. All the young people pursue meaningful employment or training. Staff have a good understanding of young people's abilities and know how well they are progressing in their learning. One young person recently received an award for his attendance and is now intent on improving his grades. Young people look forward optimistically because of the care they receive.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
<p>Young people come to the home because of their behavioural difficulties. They benefit from close attention to their safety but this has not prevented several serious incidents occurring since the last inspection. Despite careful assessment of the known risks and appropriate remedial steps by staff, young people have undertaken behaviours that have caused actual and potential harm to others on a small number of occasions. Following such events, staff calculate the new level of risk posed by young people and devise new strategies in collaboration with other agencies. For some young people the best option has been to move to more specialised settings.</p> <p>Staff use behaviour management techniques that are nearly always sufficient to avoid the use of physical interventions and young people rarely go missing. A low level of negative incidents occurs and young people consider that the staff behave fairly, for example, in the administration of rewards. Professional colleagues confirm that staff operate in an informed way to protect young people. No young people are at risk of exploitation. Staff use a clear procedure to review all negative incidents so that they avoid recurrences as much as possible. A social worker commented, 'There are supportive and positive relationships; praise and encouragement are obvious, and suitable boundaries are in place. My young person is making positive progress.' Young people confirm that the household rules are clear but that their positive relationships with staff are the source of the supportive atmosphere in the home. Consistency by staff means that young people feel safe in the home and do not experience bullying. Young people say that the other residents are 'okay' and they share activities from time-to-time. Staff members sustain and repair relationships as much as possible and educate young people to do the same.</p> <p>Satisfactory health and safety arrangements keep young people and staff physically safe. Steps are underway to make further improvements to fire evacuation training and to vehicle checks.</p>	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
<p>The manager is suitably experienced and qualified. Ofsted registered her for this home in June 2015 and she also manages another small home nearby. The two homes operate separately in most regards, which serves to emphasise the personalised care provided to each young person. After a period of some instability, not least in the staff team, the manager has brought consistency and reassurance to staff and young people. The manager is highly alert to the potential impact on young people of other children's homes. She plans the staffing and other arrangements to minimise this risk occurring. Other staff teams support the service when there are staffing shortfalls, for example, or when children are missing.</p> <p>The manager has a detailed understanding of her home and uses this to good effect, for example, in the management of staff. She structures the supervision of staff well and holds staff accountable for their specific responsibilities. Staff feel well supported. As a result, shift leaders organise individual shifts efficiently and focus on meeting young people's needs. The last inspection led to several improvements. Admission processes now include obtaining the necessary consents for the independent visitors to read young people's files. This is an important contribution to effective monitoring of the service. Also, of particular significance, is the improvement in matching new young people to the group.</p> <p>The manager knows that further improvements in the service hinge on the competence of staff. Consequently, the training of staff is a high priority and they adhere to the training programme. However, staff are not sufficiently familiar with national initiatives such as the programme to counter radicalisation or with their responsibility to report female genital mutilation. Monitoring of the service by the manager and independent visitors is satisfactory. However, the manager cannot demonstrate learning from negative incidents or from research, and there is little understanding of the service's membership of the Community of Communities as described in the statement of purpose. A written development plan is in place but does not use these sources to drive the improvement that the manager desires. The statement of purpose adequately describes the model of care used in the home and states that practice is 'rooted in research'. However, the research used is over seventeen years old and does not adequately reflect the current methodology. Children's rights are alluded to but not described and cannot be described by staff. These shortfalls have minimal impact on young people and reflect the early stage of development of the home under the new manager.</p>	

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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