

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	04/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC021679
Type of inspection	Interim
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	Nigel Evans
Inspector	Janine Shortman-Thomas

Inspection date	04/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
<p>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</p> <p>This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness.</p> <p>There were no requirements or good practice recommendations made during the last inspection. Two requirements relating to the recording of complaints and the process of notifying Ofsted of significant events and, three good practice recommendations relating to sanctions, direct work with young people and, the storage of young people's foods have been highlighted during this inspection.</p> <p>A number of young people have moved into and out of the home since the last inspection. Adequate admission processes and transition planning ensures young people are supported and prepared suitably for their transition whenever this is possible. Staff support young people well during their transition into the home or onto further identified placements. They do this by facilitating visits to the identified home and, providing ongoing care and support to young people during their transition into semi-independent placements. When young people join the home as an emergency admission they are made to feel welcome and safe on their arrival. They are provided with Welcome Packs and information so they are equipped with the knowledge of what they can expect from the home, and what services are available to them should they wish to raise any issues or concerns.</p> <p>Staff value education and promote this for all. As a result young people's attendance and attainment at school has continued to improve. Young people are at different points in their education pathways and staff actively promote them with attending and achieving within their identified placement. Staff use their relationships with young people and education providers, alongside their knowledge of the services within the area to ensure young people are reintegrated back into education settings promptly. In addition staff support young people who have left formal education to seek varied education and training opportunities. As such one young person has embraced an apprenticeship, is pleased with the progress that they are making and, is optimistic about the further opportunities that this may bring for them.</p> <p>Young people are encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle which promotes</p>	

emotional well-being and physical health. Staff work closely with the organisations therapeutic link worker and routinely monitor young people's physical health. They provide the necessary support and encouragement to ensure young people attend their therapy sessions and routine health checks and appointments when required. Staff have developed relationships with services which are available to support young people who misuse substances. They enable appointments so young people can consider their actions and the consequence for this on their health and well-being. Despite this and the work that staff undertake with young people during key working sessions around this, some young people continue to engage in these behaviours. Whilst young people are provided with a suitable diet and encouraged to engage in a recreational activities, such as swimming, which further promotes their physical well-being. Current care practice fails to educate young people about making positive food choices and, restricts all young people from accessing their sweets and treats alongside other food stocks which are secured within a locked store cupboard.

Despite positive relationships, good care practice and the best efforts of staff, some young people are unable to regulate their emotional responses effectively at all times. During the inspection staff were observed to respond calmly using encouragement and positive praise as a means of distraction and diffusion when one young person became verbally aggressive. In situations where young people are unable to achieve these positive responses and they are unable to safely manage their emotional responses, staff who are appropriately trained implement physical interventions suitably as a last resort.

Young people continue to be supported and encouraged to behave in a manner that is acceptable and safe for them and others. Staff consistently implement the behaviour management plans that are in place. They reward positive behaviours and address unacceptable behaviours using sanctions and consequences that have been identified by the young people themselves. Despite a recent of review of this care practice, sanction records still do not clearly indicate what alternative sanctions should be adopted once it has been identified that the current sanction is ineffective. Nor do they highlight what a young person can do to eradicate the consequence they have been set, if their behaviour improves.

Staff are aware of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities when young people are away from the home. They make every effort to ascertain the whereabouts of young people; maintain good links with parents and the relevant agencies such as, social workers and the police; and request support and attend strategy meetings when the level of risk increases. Police officers spoken with confirm that staff do their utmost to promote young people's welfare. They said that staff will make their own enquiries and will search the local area for young people in order to locate them and return them home safely, alongside contacting them for assistance. When young people return home, they are welcomed back and given the opportunity to talk so that they can consider their behaviours and the risk associated with this. However, little evidence of what direct work has been undertaken with young people in regards to promoting their well-being and

enabling them to make suitable choices so that they can keep safe was available.

Investigations into complaints, allegations, or suspicion of harm are addressed adequately. The Responsible Individual manages all concerns promptly while maintaining an appropriate level of consultation with all relevant agencies. However a lack of transparency within the recording of these events has been identified as not all complaints made against the home, or persons working within it are systematically recorded within the complaints book. Furthermore while the manager responds to significant incidents appropriately, taking swift action to address the issues raised, he does not systematically send these onto Ofsted at the point of the incident. In addition the providers' reluctance to use the on-line system to notify Ofsted of significant events is creating some delay. As a consequence Ofsted are unable to evaluate if the provider has taken appropriate action to safeguard young people and respond according to the provider if required.

Young people maintain positive relationships with a dedicated staff team. The three new staff who are committed to completing their planned and formal induction pathways to enable them to deliver a good standard of care and support, bring new skills and experiences to the team. Staff speak positively about working at the home and say that they feel well supported by the management team. Staff are suitably supported by an experienced and knowledgeable deputy manager in the manager's absence, and the staff are appropriately supported by the manager and leaders to deliver a good standard of care to all young people. This is so as they receive regular support and supervision. In addition regular staff handovers and team meetings, which are attended and supported by partner agencies, such as representatives from Neighbourhood Policing Team, and the therapist from the organisation ensures that staff have the opportunity to reflective on their care practice so that this can be developed further.

The home benefits from the effective management arrangements. The Registered Manager is committed to the improving the services offered within the home. He regularly seeks feedback from young people and the staff, and analyses this to identify what further work needs to be undertaken to continue to improve the lives and experiences for young people whilst maintaining their safety and promoting their well-being. The leadership team has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for continued development for the services and is committed to driving this forward.

Information about this children's home

- The home is one of a number of children's homes run by a private organisation. This home provides medium to long-term care for up to four young people who experience emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/06/2015	CH - Full	Good
24/02/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
18/07/2014	CH - Full	Good
12/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress

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
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	26/02/2016
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; or there is any incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4) (b) (e))	26/02/2016

Recommendations

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

- Just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of the home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Limits on access, specifically the locked pantry where young people sweets, treats and food stores are kept, may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home. Any decision to limit a child's access to any area of the home must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of the individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under review. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- Children must feel safe and be safe. The manager and staff should support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside of the home to the extent that any good parent would. This is in particular regards to increasing young people's knowledge and awareness of the potential dangers associated with child sexual exploitation, which they may be exposed to when they are missing from home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 43, paragraph 9.9)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is

fair. This specifically relates to ensuring that all sanction records clearly indicate what alternative sanctions should be adopted once it has been identified that the current sanction is ineffective; and identify what a young person can do to eradicate the consequence they have been set, if their behaviour improves. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 46, paragraph 9.36)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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