

## Children's homes inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>14/11/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC005045</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>The Partnership of Care Today Children's Services</b>
<b>Registered provider address</b>	<b>Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 6LR</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Vivien Snape</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Emma Coen</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>David Morgan</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>14/11/2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Sustained effectiveness</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home</b>	<b>Good</b>
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>

## SC005045

### Summary of findings

#### **The children's home's provision is good because:**

- The service benefits from effective leadership and steady improvement.
- The organisation advocates clear principles of care, which staff implement. This is the basis of young people's good progress.
- Staff establish good working relationships with each young person. Young people appreciate their efforts and feel comfortable in the home.
- Young people pursue enjoyable hobbies, which they find fulfilling. They have a lot of fun.
- Staff successfully help young people to become much more independent. They learn skills that help them look forward with confidence.
- Staff advocate firmly on behalf of young people.
- All young people engage in formal education. Staff liaise well with other professionals to arrange the most suitable provision for each young person.
- Staff speak to each young person regularly about their individual needs and wishes. They respect their rights and sustain good communication with young people's families.
- Young people learn to keep themselves safe and reduce their risky behaviour.
- The manager is not yet fully using regulatory processes to drive improvement. This reduces the pace of change.

## 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review. (Regulation 45 (3))	06/01/2017

### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that the registered manager uses the workforce plan to record the continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home's manager. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- Ensure that the registered manager judges whether incidents are sufficiently serious to make formal notifications. This is with regard to reviewing what constitutes a 'serious incident'. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.12)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

A large private company provides this service. The home provides care and accommodation for up to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/12/2015	Full	Good
10/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/09/2014	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>New young people usually arrive at the home in a planned way, rather than in an emergency. Recently, young people have progressed to this home from others within the company that are in rural settings. Consequently, these individuals are very aware of the progress they have made just to be here. It provides them with valuable continuity. They appreciate the access to community resources and the normality of the property and its urban setting. One said enthusiastically, 'My admission here couldn't have been better, it was amazing! Nowhere could be better than here.' The manager balances the needs of young people to be considered for admission with those of existing residents. Success in this matching process is a major contribution towards the positive atmosphere in the house. The three current residents have different lifestyles and interests but get on well together.</p> <p>Staff routinely consult young people in a variety of ways, for example, in house meetings. Young people have many opportunities to raise concerns with staff or people outside the home but rarely do so. One said, 'I'm very happy here. I love it! Everything's going well for me.' Young people's views play a significant part both in their day-to-day lives and in major decisions, such as where they live. Young people use independent advocates, when necessary. Staff help young people to follow their cultural and religious requirements. During the regular themed events in the home, young people find out positive things about other nationalities. Overall, young people feel fully involved in the home.</p> <p>Young people routinely engage in tasks that prepare them for greater independence. Most make good progress. One recently made a positive transition to full independence and another has a part-time job in a local shop. Staff train young people in a range of issues and confirm they understand the processes. A current young person said, 'Doing "semi-independence" is helping me. Last night I cooked my first ever, proper meal. It was chicken curry and it was beautiful!' A social worker said of another young person, '[He] has a good relationship with staff [and they] have helped him into employment and greater independence. He feels he's ready to move on.' For some young people, staff complement this process by working with their families, too. Since the last inspection, many families have praised the team for its friendly attitude and hard work on behalf of the young people. This is important recognition for the team. The work of the team helps young people to build relationships and re-establish important cultural and practical networks of support in their home areas. Those young people who live a long way from home are not disadvantaged. Staff routinely arrange visits home and other appointments.</p>	

Each young person has a suitable education placement. These are stretching but rewarding. All the young people attend regularly and make reasonable progress. Some are doing exceptionally well at present. Staff liaise well with other agencies so that young people get what they need or are entitled to. One young person transferred to a sports-based service with great success. Another has become an ambassador at his college. Consequently, young people learn to feel confident and pleased with formal education. This is significant and valuable progress, which contributes to their personal development and increases their opportunities.

The service at this home does not normally include therapy. If necessary, young people use community mental health services or school counsellors, and staff can obtain advice from the in-house therapists. Young people improve their self-control. Attention-seeking behaviour and issues that are more serious gradually reduce. This helps the majority to get the most from the opportunities on offer. Effective work by staff to overcome resistance means that all health checks are up to date. All the young people enjoy active lifestyles, including football, hobbies and regular attendance at school events. They enjoy excellent support from staff. One young person has entered public competitions with his card tricks, and one has a special interest in wrestling. Another is in a local football team. Young people profit emotionally and socially as a result.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Young people feel safe in the home and are positive about the staff. Staff consistently implement a clear policy on the behaviour management of young people. The manager has made improvements recently that refocus staff's efforts on avoiding difficulties arising in the first place. This improves engagement with each young person and shows respect. Staff rarely restrain young people. Their fairness nearly always leads to good relationships between them and young people. Young people all say that this is a strength of the service. The youth offending team worker for one young person was extremely positive about the service. She said, '[Compared to other homes] it's really good here. The staff are always ready for our appointments and keep us up to date. [The young person] is always ready. The house is always nice too.'</p> <p>Staff review young people's behaviour regularly and adapt strategies accordingly. Young people contribute to their own behaviour management plans. This means that they understand the issues and know why staff take the actions they do. One young person showed a marked decline in violent behaviour. His social worker reported, '[He] can be intimidating but staff worked very hard with him. They worked tirelessly to keep [him] occupied and out of trouble.' After he left, the young person contacted staff to thank them for all they had taught him and to</p>	

describe how he had improved himself.

When young people go missing, staff undertake thorough searches and liaise closely with social workers and the police. Independent professionals then visit the young people to discuss their reasons for leaving and to provide support. They said, 'Staff work with us [to reduce incidents] and encourage young people to avoid difficulties. The residents are always positive about the staff, even if they're not positive about being in care.' The main cause recently has been the attraction of external factors rather than difficulties in the home. Young people feel safe in the home. Staff discuss with young people the risks they face and offer alternative strategies. Over time, this usually leads to fewer incidents and greater safety for young people.

Young people have often experienced severe difficulties in the past. They demonstrate their good progress by having greater free time, unsupervised use of money, and travelling independently. Staff help them understand and value these achievements. Staff fully understand the risks that young people pose to themselves and others and impose preventative measures to keep them safe. As young people progress, staff use a proportionate approach to withdrawing their help. Although this naturally means that young people occasionally lapse, reductions occur in incident frequency and severity. Overall, the vast majority of young people become increasingly safe. They reduce their criminal behaviour, for example, and their misuse of drugs and alcohol.

In the vast majority of instances, staff contact relevant agencies as soon as issues arise. This benefits young people substantially because they receive coordinated care. This has the greatest impact when their families participate, as most do. The manager has improved the communication with Ofsted since the last inspection. However, occasions remain when the manager and responsible individual have not sent notifications about serious incidents. This represents a misunderstanding about the definition of 'serious' and reduces Ofsted's ability to monitor the service. The responsible individual has implemented extra measures to avoid this occurring in future.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The manager ensures that the service meets its statement of purpose well. She is suitably qualified and has been the registered manager of this home, and a similar one nearby, since 2015. A strong deputy manager is in post and the company has a good system for promoting and training staff.</p> <p>The statement of purpose provides commissioners and social workers with the</p>	



required information as well as helpful additional details about the area. The document also emphasises the core principles of practice, including the provision of services tailored to individual children's needs and the establishment of warm relationships between staff and children. These are evident in practice. The manager regularly amends the document, for example, when there are minor inaccuracies. The document gives a positive and accurate impression of the service.

Senior staff are proactive and maintain a strong focus on young people's needs. They challenge other professionals, when necessary, yet sustain positive relationships with them. They did this to good effect recently to help a young person obtain a more suitable education placement. They helped another young man to move from the home when it was clearly not meeting his needs. Senior staff are keen to improve the service. They have made progress with the matters raised at the last inspection, such as notifications.

Since the last full inspection, three staff have resigned for positive reasons. This has reduced the number of qualified staff to four. The replacement staff are on track to become qualified within the statutory timescale. The manager ensures that an experienced member of staff is always on duty. Staff receive a good level of support and training. The manager supplements the formal courses by providing training in staff meetings and personal supervision meetings. This keeps team members up-to-date with developments in the profession. Recently, this has included refresher training about child sexual exploitation. This is a preventative step because the current residents are at low risk. Staff feel positive about their work and maintain a pleasant atmosphere in the home.

The independent visitors have recently improved the quality of their reports. The reports are now more authoritative and are a clearer reflection of the quality of care. One visit recently occurred at the weekend, which provided important confirmation that appropriate standards apply at all times of the week. The manager completes six-monthly assessments of the quality of care. These summarise the period well and reflect young people's progress. Importantly, they also identify young people's views, including the fact that young people feel comfortable with staff. However, her reports contain no action plan for maintaining or improving the quality of care provided by staff to young people. Similarly, the drive to improve staff performance is limited in their personal development plans to training events, whereas additional methods of development are desirable for some staff.

All records are clear and show each young person's achievements. The manager has simplified the way staff record young people's needs and progress. This improvement makes young people's files more user-friendly. Young people are familiar with their targets and their social workers and families receive regular updates. This helps to ensure that young people receive consistent advice and make good progress.

## 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 children looked after 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for children looked after and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2016