

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	02/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC021679
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	The Partnership of Care Today Children's Services
Registered provider address	Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 6LR

Responsible individual	Vivien Snape
Registered manager	Nigel Evans
Inspector	Sarah Billett

Inspection date	02/11/2016
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

SC021679

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people live in a warm and homely environment, and are supported by a consistent staff group and a high staff ratio. Young people report that staff are supportive. Positive relationships between staff and young people were observed during the inspection, and these positive relationships form the basis of effective work with young people on areas identified in their individual plans.
- Staff quickly establish young people's strengths and talents, which means that young people are engaged in a wide variety of activities in their spare time, such as Zumba or volunteer work at an animal farm.
- Young people feel safe living at the home. Staff understand the risks associated with 'missing' behaviour and child sexual exploitation. When young people go missing, staff make all possible attempts to find them, and report the young person missing to the police.
- Staff undertake a high level of direct work with young people on identified areas of risk or need. This has resulted in a reduction in risk-taking behaviours for some young people at the home.
- Education is a high priority for staff in the home and, as a result, all young people attend school regularly and make progress educationally.

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
<p>40: Notification of a serious event</p> <p>(4) The registered provider must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if:</p> <p>(c) There is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there.</p>	04/11/2016

Recommendations

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

- The registered manager must ensure that an evaluation of missing incidents is undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.31)
- The registered manager and staff must review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern arise. The review should provide the opportunity to amend practice to ensure it meets the need of each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

Full report

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
04/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/06/2015	Full	Good
24/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/07/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>The registered manager and staff actively promote young people's educational progress. Most young people are in full-time education and, when they are not, the registered manager challenges the local authority and is proactive in ensuring that alternative activities are offered. Staff are skilled at working with hard-to-engage young people to support them back into education or obtain employment. Consequently, young people are meaningfully engaged in school or employment, which provides structure for them as well as educational attainment.</p> <p>Young people have positive relationships with staff. Young people said that 'staff are good, treat us well' and are 'nice, kind and helpful, and sometimes they give us good ideas'. Positive and trusting relationships with staff are pivotal to ensuring that young people feel secure and make progress from their starting points. Staff support young people to maintain and improve their health. All young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician, and are supported to attend medical appointments. Staff encourage healthy eating and all young people have a 'five a day plan on their case' to ensure that they are having a healthy and balanced diet. Staff work in conjunction with specialist services such as the dietician, when necessary and, for one young person, this has resulted in planned weight loss which has had a positive effect on his health and self-esteem.</p> <p>The registered manager and staff are proactive in working with specialist services such as the child and adolescent mental health services, when necessary, and utilise the support of the in-house counsellor when required. A psychologist reported that she has: 'always been very impressed with the staff... they are excellent at engaging children and young people and trying to meet each child's needs... Their concern and use of attuned and nurturing caregiving has helped X to stabilise and learn to regulate her emotions better.'</p> <p>The registered manager and staff regularly consult young people on their views about the home, the care that they receive and their plans. They do this through individual key-work sessions and young people's meetings, when their views on menu planning and suggestions for the home are recorded. This ensures that young people's voices are heard and that their views are taken into account in all aspects of their lives.</p> <p>Young people know how to complain. There is a comments and suggestions box in the living room which young people are aware of. Most young people felt that they would talk to staff if they were worried or had a problem.</p> <p>Staff spend time with young people, discovering their interests and talents.</p>	

Consequently, young people participate in a wide range of activities according to their individual interests such as going to a farm, football games and Zumba. Staff ensure that young people's relationships with friends are nurtured by supporting them to visit friends in the local area and encouraging them to bring friends home. This assists young people to develop positive social relationships.

Young people experience care that is sensitive and responsive to their family history, including their ethnicity, faith and belief. Staff are skilled at helping and promoting young people's understanding of their culture and faith by spending time with young people in key-work sessions and completing good direct work on cultural heritage, for example on language, food and religion.

Staff work with young people to develop independence skills in line with their age and stage of development. One young person has been prepared in order to take the bus to school on his home. This work has been underpinned by a high level of staff support and careful risk assessment to ensure that the young person can learn this in a staged and safe way. This means that young people develop the necessary life skills to equip them for adulthood.

The registered manager and staff manage transitions into the home and from the home well. Young people are settled and welcomed into the home when they arrive, and the other young people are prepared in advance. There is a child-friendly picture in one of the living areas with photographs and information about all of the staff, as well as plenty of other relevant information to support young people to settle into the home. Transitions out of the home have been planned, as staff continue to support young people who leave the home to provide consistency for the young person into adulthood.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>The registered manager and staff identify and understand the risks associated with young people, and these are clearly set out in risk assessments. Staff spend time with young people in regular key-work sessions, helping young people to understand their behaviour and the risks associated with it. For example, staff use workbooks with young people during key-work sessions on child sexual exploitation to try to educate them to reduce the risk. The registered manager and staff work robustly with other agencies such as the police to keep young people safe. This has resulted in a reduction in the risk of child sexual exploitation for one young person who has recently left the home.</p> <p>When young people go missing, staff are proactive. They search for young people and telephone any known contacts. Staff have a good understanding of 'missing from home' procedures. Staff follow up 'missing' episodes with key-work sessions to help young people to understand the risks and dangers involved in going missing</p>	

and to try to understand why the 'missing' episode occurred. However, the registered manager does not sufficiently evaluate 'missing' incidents after they have taken place, which means that the opportunity is lost to identify any gaps in knowledge and skills for staff and any emerging patterns in a young person's 'missing' behaviour.

There has been a reduction of negative behaviour for some of the young people living in the home, evident in a reduction in the use of restraint and fewer incidents involving these young people. A social worker for one young person commented: 'Staff have offered consistency and patience in working with X to provide him with clear boundaries and good routines in a secure environment. X has greatly benefited from this and X's behaviours have improved remarkably during his time in this unit.'

Staff ensure that there are clear boundaries in place for young people, and ongoing discussion in team meetings means that staff all work in a consistent way in addressing negative behaviour by young people. Staff encourage positive behaviour by using appropriate rewards and praise for good behaviour and appropriate sanctions, if necessary. The registered manager evaluates the effectiveness of any sanctions used with young people, and strategies to manage individual young people's behaviour are regularly discussed and reviewed in team meetings.

Staff are adequately trained in the use of restraint, and restraints are carried out in accordance with the legislative framework. Restraints are recorded appropriately, and the young person is debriefed and offered the opportunity to speak to an advocate after the restraint. As with 'missing' incidents, the registered manager does not sufficiently evaluate incidents of restraint after they have taken place, which means that opportunities to review practice and respond promptly to any issues, trends or concerns are missed.

A number of restraints during this inspection period have led to allegations being made by the young person. These have all been referred to the local authority designated officer, and the registered manager has taken appropriate action following these allegations, for example ensuring that staff do not work alone.

The registered manager works well with the police community support officer in the local area, and any risks in the vicinity are set out in the locality risk assessment. These are addressed with young people in key-work sessions to minimise risk and keep young people safe.

Young people are protected by a safe and effective recruitment process, and staff understand safeguarding policies and procedures, which ensures that they keep young people safe.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The home is effectively and efficiently managed by a permanent, suitably experienced manager who is child focused and has considerable experience in working with children and young people.</p> <p>The registered manager engages well with the young people and continues to take an active role in working with them. This means that he develops a good understanding of each young person's needs and strengths, and the progress that they have made. The registered manager also recognises when young people are not progressing, and has called disruption meetings and ended placements when this has been necessary. The registered manager proactively challenges local authorities to ensure that young people receive the support that they need.</p> <p>The home is appropriately staffed by a stable and permanent staff team. Staff receive regular and effective supervision, and feel well supported by the registered manager. One staff member commented that the registered manager was 'very approachable' and that she feels 'really well supported'.</p> <p>Staff receive regular training which is relevant to their role and the young people's needs. For example, some staff have received recent mental health and conflict resolution training. Staff share learning from any training attended at team meetings. This ensures that all staff benefit from this training in their work and that young people receive a consistent approach from staff. The registered manager has succession plans in place, with some of his more senior staff holding a level 5 qualification or working towards this.</p> <p>The registered manager and staff have good working relationships with a wide range of professionals to ensure that young people's needs are met and that young people receive a multi-agency approach to their care.</p> <p>The registered manager does not ensure that significant events are notified to Ofsted in a timely manner and has not met the requirement regarding this from the last inspection. This is with particular reference to allegations which have been made, which means there is a lack of transparency and a delay in Ofsted's monitoring of significant incidents to establish whether there are any patterns or themes.</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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