

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	07/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC021679
Type of inspection	Interim
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	07/02/2017
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 judges that it has sustained effectiveness.</p> <p>Young people living in the home continue to make good progress from their individual starting points. Staff have worked hard to ensure that all the young people have a school place, and as a result all young people in the home attend school regularly. Staff support young people's educational progress by transporting them to school and using rewards systems to encourage regular school attendance. As a result, young people are engaged positively during the day, and they have the opportunity to meet their educational potential.</p> <p>Staff encourage young people to participate in a wide range of activities specific to their individual interests. For example, young people attend activities in the community such as boxing groups, circuit classes and the gym. Staff promote young people's friendships with others, and are proactive in making contact with friends' parents to support this, as any good parent would. This means that young people develop interests and social relationships safely outside the home, which increases their confidence and self-esteem.</p> <p>Young people make progress with their health due to advice and support from staff. Staff encourage young people to engage in a healthy lifestyle and eat healthily, and they spend time with young people to help them understand the importance of making healthier life choices. This results in improved health for some young people. One young person has lost a significant amount of weight, and commented, 'Staff have helped me with my weight. I used to eat lots of crisps; now I have reasonable portions.'</p> <p>For some young people there has been a reduction in challenging behaviour due a consistent approach to behaviour by the staff team. Staff spend time with young people, getting to know them and identifying triggers to their behaviour, and are skilled at de-escalating situations quickly. As a result, there has been a reduction in the number of physical restraints used in the home, and some young people are learning more effective ways of managing their emotions and feelings. One young person commented, '[Staff have helped me] get rid of my past a bit. You would not know how bad I was when I came here but they have helped me to conquer that. They have put sanctions in place and I learned from these. I didn't want to be that</p>	

person.'

Staff are proactive when young people go missing. They search for young people and follow missing from home procedures consistently, and all missing incidents are recorded. Staff spend time with young people on their return, helping them understand the risks inherent in this behaviour to try to prevent further missing episodes. The manager ensures that return interviews are carried out when young people return home, which provides an opportunity for missing behaviour to be explored with young people and evaluated to try to reduce further missing episodes.

Staff work collaboratively with other professionals, such as the police and child sexual exploitation social workers for young people who have been identified as being at risk of child sexual exploitation. There is evidence of staff spending time with young people to educate them on the risks from sexual exploitation, and staff are quick to identify and report any relevant information to the police. As a result, the police have been able to take action from this information to keep young people safe. A CSE social worker commented, '[Staff are] great, brilliant, they are always in contact with me. They keep a log and then whatever I get told ties in with my visit to X.' She added that she felt that staff had gone 'above and beyond' in trying to keep a young person safe from harm.

Most young people like living in the home and feel safe. One young person commented that living in the home is 'great – it feels like my home'. The manager ensures that admissions are well planned, and he completes an impact assessment prior to admission. However, the impact assessments lack evaluation of the impact of new admissions on the existing group of young people. While this has not had a significant effect on young people's progress in the home, young people did comment on the impact of new admissions since the last inspection – for example, staff having less time to spend doing activities with them – and this does have the potential to cause instability in the home. From discussion with young people during the inspection, a shortfall was identified in terms of safe storage of personal belongings, and as a result the manager needs to ensure that young people have a lockable cabinet or drawers to secure their personal belongings in the home.

The registered manager has ensured the requirement made at the last inspection has been met, and has sent a number of notifications to Ofsted since the last inspection. There has been one allegation since the last inspection, which was referred to the local authority designated officer and dealt with by the organisation. This highlighted some shortfalls in how staff had managed and recorded an incident involving a young person being under the influence of alcohol. The home has responded robustly to address these shortfalls by ensuring staff received training in identifying alcohol use and what actions to take. From speaking with staff during the inspection, they now have good knowledge of how to manage similar incidents in the future. However, the manager needs to ensure that if staff are used from other homes within the organisation to cover shifts, they have the necessary skills and experience to meet the needs of the young people in the

home.

The manager is very involved in the day-to-day running of the home, and is supported by a proactive assistant manager and a stable staff team committed to achieving good outcomes for the young people in their care. Staff have weekly team meetings, in which training is delivered, practice is evaluated and young people are discussed to ensure that young people receive a consistent approach by all members of the staff team. The registered manager uses a range of quality assurance processes to monitor and improve the home's performance, including information from independent visitor reports and feedback. As such, he is quick to identify and action any areas of development required, which improves young people's experience of living in the home.

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 have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/11/2016	Full	Good
04/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/06/2015	Full	Good
24/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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>12. The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered provider must ensure that:</p> <p>2 (a)(vi) staff take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare.</p> <p>This relates to the manager ensuring that all staff who work in the home are aware of what actions to take should a young person present under the influence of alcohol.</p>	31/03/2017
<p>13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must ensure that:</p> <p>(c) staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.</p> <p>This relates to the manager ensuring that if staff from other homes in the organisation cover shifts in this home that they have the experience and skills to meet the needs of each child.</p>	31/03/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that when undertaking impact assessments of new admissions, the registered manager needs to consider the impact the placement has on the existing group. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.4)
- Ensure that young people have lockable cabinets to store personal items securely. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.19)

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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