

SC005045

Registered provider: The Partnership of Care Today Children's Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

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. The manager is also responsible for another children's home that is located nearby.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 February 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	Good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 28 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people benefit from high levels of continuity of staff and good leadership.
- Staff establish close relationships with young people.

- Staff liaise effectively with young people's families so that young people can stay in touch with people who are important to them.
- Relatively few serious incidents occur. The vast majority of young people learn how to stay safe. Staff address difficulties decisively and by working in partnership with other agencies.
- Young people make good progress in most cases. They establish social and recreational networks and develop ambitions. Good training programmes prepare them for independence.
- Young people use specialist services when necessary to enable them to overcome difficulties and make progress.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Occasionally, staff do not respond to young people's wishes within a reasonable timescale. This undermines the consultation process.
- Staff have insufficient information about the extent of young people's smoking habits. This jeopardises meaningful planning to address the problem.
- New staff do not receive the required level of support.
- The statement of purpose contains inaccurate information about staff training.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/11/2016	Full	Good
23/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/12/2015	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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>The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 16(3)(a))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that information contained in the statement of purpose about staff training is correct and relevant to the particular needs of this home.</p>	16/04/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside of the home (where appropriate) and they are encouraged to participate in those activities. ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)

This is with regard to responding to young people's wishes to go ice-skating.

- Ensure that when children have specific health needs or conditions, they should be supported to manage these subject to their age and understanding. ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.10)

Specifically, ensure that staff are clear about the scale of young people's smoking habits and the action needed to help them to stop smoking.

- Ensure that the registered person has systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

In particular, ensure that new staff receive supervision at the correct intervals.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people enjoy good-quality care from committed staff. Some young people have lived at the home for several years and have made marked progress. This is a positive reflection of the consistent care that they receive from staff and the registered manager.

Whenever possible, new young people arrive at the home on a carefully planned basis. When this is not possible, staff do their best to make the introductions as effective as possible. For example, one young person visited the home before school and moved in later in the day. This enabled the young person to visit the home, ask questions, and meet staff and young people before moving in. Staff worked hard to facilitate this despite the short timescales available.

One young person found it increasingly difficult to feel comfortable at the home. His written risk assessment documents show the reasons for this. Despite the efforts of staff and their close liaison with other agencies, the young person moved back to his family at short notice. Staff reduced the impact of this unplanned change by providing his family with short-term support in their home.

Young people know how to complain, but rarely do so. They also have advocates that act on their behalf. One boy has lived here for only a few months and said that the staff are 'really nice' and that they 'listen to him'. Visiting professionals comment on the pleasant atmosphere in the home. A visiting tutor wrote, '[It] is a very homely place; warm, clean and efficiently run. The staff are always friendly and helpful.'

Staff meet young people's individual needs well. One young person attends a Caribbean barber locally and staff facilitate children's religious needs. Staff raise social and topical issues with young people during young people's meetings and in day-to-day conversations. This helps young people to understand current affairs and social diversity.

Staff develop and maintain good relationships with young people's families, which helps ensure consistency of care between the adults. Young people receive good support to help them to maintain safe and positive contact with their families.

Young people routinely take on greater levels of independence, including responsibility for their finances. Young people develop emotional maturity. This clear progress helps them to prepare emotionally and practically for when they leave the home. Consequently, young people feel secure and develop ambitions. One young person is looking ahead with confidence because he has a career plan.

All the young people pursue more varied lifestyles than previously. Staff gradually introduce them to a wide range of new activities. As a result, young people join local sports clubs and visit new places. Young people and staff compile memory books to record all of the positive experiences that young people have enjoyed. Occasionally, staff are too slow to respond to young people's reasonable requests. For example, one young person has been asking to go ice-skating for some time, but this has not yet happened. This compromises the otherwise high levels of consultation.

Young people enjoy good general health and use mental health services, as required. Very few young people smoke or take illicit drugs. However, staff are not sufficiently aware of the extent of one young person's smoking habit. Smoking has a potentially damaging effect on the young person's health and accurate information is necessary if staff are to provide or obtain relevant advice to help him to stop smoking.

Staff support young people's education well and young people achieve passes in examinations and progress onto college courses. Staff encourage young people to complete homework. Staff attend school events and liaise closely with teachers. As a result, most young people achieve their potential. When necessary, tutors visit the home to resume young people's education or to prevent interruptions. One young person is pleased that a work experience placement unexpectedly offered him additional hours. This is a boost to his self-confidence.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The staff protect young people well. Few serious incidents occur, young people rarely go missing, and there have been no incidents of radicalisation or child sexual exploitation.

Staff have a good understanding of each young person's behaviour and establish meaningful relationships with them. The manager monitors incidents to identify any patterns and, wherever possible, avoid reoccurrences. A member of the youth offending team described the staff's support of one young person as 'first class' and 'outstanding'.

Senior staff in particular engage well with neighbours, other young people's homes, and they are aware of what is happening in the community. Other professionals feel positive about the approach that staff use. One social worker recently wrote, 'Good relationships form the basis of the behaviour management system. Behaviour is analysed systematically [by staff] and issues are identified quickly and acted on.' Staff implement clear boundaries and routines. The young people identify no concerns about how staff behave, and one young person described staff as 'brilliant'. Another young person wrote on his departure from the home, 'I have never had to complain. I loved living there and the staff did everything to make me happy.'

The vast majority of young people learn to manage their behaviour and show substantial reductions in their risk levels. Two of the young people reflected this recently by not involving themselves in the negative behaviour of another resident. Young people make progress and, as a result, obtain greater independence. They are able to experience the same range of social and career opportunities as their peers. Young people learn to do this safely.

The property provides young people and staff with safe accommodation. The company has increased the standard of fire safety measures above the minimum required for a registered children's home of this size.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Ofsted registered the manager in 2015. The manager is suitably experienced and has an appropriate qualification in management. She is currently undertaking a higher-level

management qualification to further develop her knowledge and skills.

The registered manager operates the home in line with the statement of purpose. However, the document is not completely up to date. For example, it contains inaccurate information about mandatory training courses that do not apply to the staff working at this home. This shortfall has no direct impact on young people, but it does indicate a lack of regular review of this document.

Recent challenges have included staff turnover, the temporary absence of the deputy manager, and the difficulties presented by one child in particular. These have contributed to minor slippage in some areas. Nevertheless, the manager has continued to press for the best outcomes for each young person. On occasions, she has promoted young people's progress by formally complaining about the lack of support provided by certain agencies. This served to minimise further delay and helped to coordinate the support of young people who have significant difficulties.

New staff have joined the team. They have received regular support, but it has not always been at the required frequency due to the temporary absence of the deputy manager. For example, staff have not received fortnightly supervision as outlined in the home's statement of purpose. Other staff are taking on managerial responsibilities that will help avoid a recurrence of this shortfall. In other regards, the supervision and annual appraisal of staff are up to date.

Half of the staff have a formal qualification. The company provides a comprehensive training programme that includes regular refresher courses, the provision of training during staff meetings, and online. This enables the staff to keep up to date with their knowledge and skills. Courses make staff aware of social issues such as female genital mutilation and radicalisation. The manager reviews serious incidents with staff so that they learn about the causes and the effectiveness of their actions. In addition, staff embark on courses that are of particular interest. For example, one member of staff is taking a course in counselling. Overall, the training programme is stimulating and serves to keep staff up to date.

Formal monitoring of the service occurs regularly. The manager is considering ways to improve the presentation of the monitoring reports and quality of care review reports to maximise their impact and highlight the effect that young people's views have on the service. This shows a commitment to ongoing improvement.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC005045

Provision sub-type: 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: Emma Coen

Inspectors

David Morgan, social care inspector

Sarah Junor-Fitzpatrick, social care inspector

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