

SC021679

Registered provider: Care Today

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private organisation. The home provides care for up to four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 November 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 28 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/06/2017	Full	Outstanding
07/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/11/2016	Full	Good
04/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.</p> <p>(2) When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>(a) if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and</p> <p>(b) to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (1) (2) (a) (b))</p>	03/12/2018
<p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ('the statement of purpose') which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16 (1))</p> <p>This relates specifically to updating the details of staff working at the home.</p>	03/12/2018

Recommendations

- Each child should have permission for staff to administer first aid and non-prescription medication from a person with parental responsibility for them recorded in their relevant plan. For looked after children, this permission should be sought and arranged by the child's social worker. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.14)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home experienced a period of instability following the last inspection. The home looked after some challenging young people who were not appropriately matched. Young people with disruptive and unsafe behaviours were subsequently moved on to more suitable placements. As a result, the home is now settled and stable again.

The home provides young people with a physically safe, appropriately secure, warm, comfortable and homely environment. The home has been completely refurnished and redecorated since the last inspection. New furniture, carpets and flooring have all been purchased for the home and a new shower room and a kitchen have been fitted. A social worker reported, 'I am very happy with the work done with [young person] at this time. The renovation completed on the home really helps to create a homelier environment.'

Young people benefit from well-planned, individualised care that promotes their needs effectively and supports change and improvement in their lives. Young people make good progress in relation to their individual starting points across aspects of their physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. Staff provide young people with continuity of care to promote consistency and stability in their lives.

A young person reported, 'I have lived in about six different children's homes and this one is the best. They help you with your problems and keep us safe. They've settled me into school and tried to get me more involved in activities. The staff are the best thing about this home.'

Young people attend school or alternative educational provision regularly and there are clear expectations for young people to attend. The home maintains highly effective partnerships with the providers of young people's education to promote their educational achievements and learning. Staff actively promote and support young people's educational progress. A school support worker reported, 'Less incidents of aggressive behaviour. Lovely to see [young person] so much more settled.'

Young people have exceptionally good relationships with staff. They benefit from positive role models they look up to and learn from. Young people are involved in key decisions and there are good arrangements for enabling them to influence and contribute to the running of the home. Staff spend quality time with young people, both individually and collectively as a group, to advise, befriend and support them.

Young people are involved in enjoyable activities, such as dance, youth clubs, going to the cinema, bowling, football and pamper nights. Staff promote and encourage young people's specific interests and hobbies. A young person reported, 'It's fun, kind and friendly. It's better than where I was living previously. We do activities and I get to have my hair done and go out with my friends.'

Staff promote contact to ensure that young people can sustain their close relationships with the people who are most important to them. One young person who does not have any family contact is provided with an independent visitor. As a result, they have access to a trusted adult to do activities with, who listens to them and shows an active interest in their lives. Staff maintain good relationships with the families of young people to provide consistency in their lives.

Young people are registered with a doctor, a dentist and an optician. They have access to the services that they need to sustain good health. Young people with additional needs have access to specialist support to promote their emotional well-being. Medical consent is in place and staff are clear about the types of health decisions that are charged and delegated to them. However, not all young people have parental consent for the administration of suitable homely remedies. Consequently, a recommendation is made in respect of this issue.

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

Staff consistently place the safety of young people at the centre of their practice, irrespective of the challenges that this presents. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of young people's specific needs and emerging vulnerabilities and take appropriate action to address them.

Risk-taking behaviours, such as going missing from home for lengthy periods, self-harm, drug misuse and offending, have reduced considerably in relation to young people's starting points. Young people become increasingly safer because of the actions that staff take to protect and support them. Young people are kept safe and feel safe.

Staff consistently have high expectations of behaviour. Staff implement the home's rules and boundaries consistently and maintain good order and discipline within the home. This helps to provide a safe environment for young people. Staff promote young people's positive behaviour effectively and ensure that the use of sanctions is kept to a minimum. Where sanctions are used, they are clear, proportionate and fair. Incidents of negative behaviour are reducing, and young people are responding positively to their incentives and rewards. Young people reported, 'They have good boundaries and the rules are fair. I wouldn't change anything. It's all looking good.'

Restraint is only ever used as a last resort to keep young people safe from harm. Allegations of abuse are handled professionally, and significant incidents are shared with the appropriate safeguarding agencies to ensure that young people are protected from abuse and other forms of significant harm.

Staff are trained in child protection and have an excellent understanding of their safeguarding roles. They maintain highly effective partnerships with the police and all other safeguarding agencies to support and protect young people. The use of clear risk assessment, combined with effective behaviour management strategies and the positive professional partnerships, promotes the safety and well-being of young people. Young people rarely go missing, and the frequency with which young people are absent, or go

missing, is reducing in relation to their starting points.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home benefits from a well-qualified, deeply committed and experienced registered manager, who exercises strong and effective leadership of the home. The registered manager prioritises the needs of young people effectively and strives to achieve the best outcomes possible for them. He has consistently high expectations of staff and high aspirations for young people. The registered manager is an inspirational leader who leads staff by example and channels their efforts effectively.

Young people benefit from well-trained, suitably qualified, caring and experienced staff. A diverse staff team is employed to care for young people. As a result, young people have the benefit of staff of different genders, ethnicities and backgrounds. Young people benefit from the different types of skills, life experiences and individual approaches that a diverse staff team provides for them. As a result, young people are more appreciative of differences and accepting of cultural diversity, which is actively promoted for young people within this home.

Staff are managed effectively and feel well supported, supervised and led. They benefit from having regular, practice-related supervision. The training and developmental needs of staff are identified and met. Staff benefit from high-quality training that develops their skills and knowledge and enables them to meet the specific and evolving needs of the young people.

Staff utilise team meetings to discuss young people's needs and to share their knowledge and learning with each other. Reflective practice is a strong feature of this home. The manager makes good use of stakeholder feedback to influence the care that the home provides. The views of young people, parents, police, schools and other professionals are sought on a regular basis.

The registered manager provides staff with a clear sense of purpose and direction. He ensures that staff share, embrace and implement the home's ethos, approach and philosophy in caring for young people. The statement of purpose requires a minor amendment to reflect minor changes that have recently taken place in the staffing arrangements in the home.

The home is visited each month by an independent professional who scrutinises the quality of young people's care and the arrangements made to safeguard them and promote their safety and well-being. However, consent has still to be given by young people and their social workers for this person to access young people's private and confidential records. Consequently, a recommendation is made for the home to obtain consent.

The registered manager has an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. He tackles the home's identified weaknesses and makes effective use of the home's internal and external monitoring activities to secure the

home's continuing 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: SC021679

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Today

Registered provider address: Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 6LR

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Nigel Evans

Inspector

Anthony Kyem: social care inspector

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