

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 provider operates this home. The home offers care and accommodation for up to three children who have experienced childhood instability, resulting in trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The registered manager holds a level 4 qualification in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 December 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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 6 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/02/2018	Full	Good
28/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/11/2016	Full	Good
23/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- When a child needs additional health or well-being support, staff should work with the child's placing authority to enable proper and immediate access to any specialist medical, psychological or psychiatric support required, and challenge them through regulation 5 – engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met, if this doesn't happen. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.10).
In particular, ensure that staff seek advice from the in-house therapist in a timely manner to help meet the needs of young people.
- All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3).
In particular, ensure that internal plans reflect the needs of each young person.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people live in a warm, friendly and caring home. Staff show an exceptional level of commitment to young people and help them to build strong and trusted relationships. This helps young people to develop a strong sense of belonging. A young person scored the home 10 out of 10 and told the inspector, 'Staff are always supportive, I feel that I am their priority. I never want to leave here.'

Staff support young people to take part in day-to-day and more complex decisions about their lives. For example, weekly meetings offer them the opportunity to discuss menus, activities and any concerns they may have. In addition, staff ensure that young people access independent advocates for support with more complex decisions about their care. Young people also work alongside staff to review their progress and set targets. As a result, young people feel respected and valued.

All young people are in education and are making good progress. Staff hold high aspirations for young people and support them to understand the importance of education. Strong and consistent rules and boundaries are the basis for excellent school attendance. In addition, staff work closely with schools to ensure that young people make significant progress from their starting points. A teacher told the inspector, 'He (young person) has made some huge strides forward since living in the home. It's been amazing to see.'

Staff work hard to ensure that young people spend time with people who are important to them, including families and friends. Staff also keep families regularly updated about

young people's progress. This helps young people to improve their family relationships and develop strong support networks for the future.

Young people enjoy a range of activities in the home and community, including trips to the cinema, bowling and swimming pool. Staff also support young people to develop new hobbies. For example, some young people attend a local football club while another enjoys baking with staff. In addition, young people enjoy spending time with their friends in the local area. This helps them to build confidence and feel part of their local community.

Young people who are new to the home settle quickly. Staff take time to get to know them and identify their needs. They work closely with key professionals to ensure that young people get off to the best possible start.

The home environment is well presented and homely. Young people's bedrooms and lounges are well decorated and furnished. Some young people have pets. Pictures that capture happy memories are on show throughout. Staff and young people use humour frequently and laughter often fills the home. Young people thrive in this positive and relaxed environment and have a sense of pride in their home. A young person told the inspector, 'We have a laugh; there's nothing bad about living here. This place has been the best for me, no doubt.'

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

Young people make significant progress in managing their risk-taking behaviours. Incidents of young people self-harming, going missing or becoming involved in antisocial behaviour have considerably reduced and now rarely occur. Staff practice strikes a healthy balance between nurturing care and enforcing consistent boundaries. This helps young people to feel settled and safe.

Risk assessments and behaviour management plans are effective and provide staff with clear guidance to keep young people safe. The registered manager uses her initiative and responds well to new risks as they present. Staff also benefit from regular refresher training on key aspects of safeguarding young people. In addition, the management team uses research to inform and develop staff practice. For example, a recent staff meeting used research to discuss young people's healthy relationships. As a result, a young person was offered specialist support. This proactive approach makes an exceptional difference to young people's lives.

Staff offer young people a calm and nurturing home environment. They listen to young people and know them well. Staff give young people time and space to make sense of difficult emotions and feelings. Young people are involved in devising strategies to de-escalate difficult situations. As a result, incidents of challenging behaviour rarely occur in the home and have significantly reduced over time. A young person told the inspector, 'My behaviour has got a lot better. Staff help me to calm down, they aren't in my face.'

Staff support young people to take age-appropriate risks. For example, young people

spend time away from the home and enjoy socialising with friends. A young person has a part-time job and is in a healthy relationship with his girlfriend. Staff act, as any good parent would, by getting to know young people's employers, friends and family. This helps staff to protect young people while still allowing them the opportunity to enjoy friendships and play a significant part in their local community.

Targeted key-work sessions and young people's meetings focus on the risks associated with smoking, substance misuse and antisocial behaviour. As a result, staff support young people to understand how their behaviours may be harmful to themselves and others. When necessary, staff invite specialist agencies to support young people with their risk-taking behaviour. Staff also have a proactive relationship with police community support officers.

Staff frequently reward young people for positive behaviour. Young people respond well to this practice and take pride in setting and achieving their behaviour targets. As a result, young people learn to take responsibility for and make better choices about their behaviour.

The registered manager ensures that recruitment processes are safe and robust. This helps to protect young people from unsafe adults.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The staff team is established and diverse, and offers young people nurturing care. Young people benefit from access to a staff team with a range of expertise and interests. Staff know young people well and genuinely care about them. They provide a strong, well-considered and consistent approach to caring for young people.

The management team is currently working towards the relevant level 5 qualification. Staff have either completed the level 3 qualification or are in the process of doing so. In addition, they have access to a comprehensive training programme that equips them with the skills and knowledge to meet young people's needs. The registered manager is keen to develop her staff. Some are part of the internal progression programme, while others undertake specialist training in counselling or take up lead roles as in-house assessors.

The registered manager has effective monitoring systems in place. Monthly reports help her to track patterns of behaviour and identify strengths and areas of development. The registered manager is passionate about young people in her care. She is a strong advocate and will actively challenge agencies if she feels that there are shortfalls in young people's care. Her aspiration inspires staff to offer young people high-quality care.

The registered manager ensures that, in general, young people receive personalised care that responds to their needs. Staff work alongside young people to review their progress and set targets. In addition, the registered manager has introduced new ideas to help young people engage in their care. For example, she develops new ways to summarise their notable achievements each month. However, staff did not consult with the in-house

therapist in a timely manner to address the needs of a young person. In addition, some key information relating to family contact is missing from a young person's internal plan.

The registered manager ensures that staff receive effective supervision to explore young people's progress and the demands of the role. Regular staff meetings encourage healthy challenge and discussion on how best to meet young people's needs. Staff are keen to develop their practice and attend in-house training on key aspects of care. Some of the training is independently researched. This level of staff commitment means that young people benefit from well-informed care and make excellent progress.

Staff develop excellent working relationships with a number of agencies. They are proactive and share information frequently with key partners to ensure that young people receive well-rounded and consistent care. A headteacher told the inspector, 'Staff do a daily handover with the school. If he (young person) has had a difficult evening they let us know. The support he receives is seamless.'

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

Inspector

Gareth Leckey, social care inspector

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