

SC005048

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

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to eight children who have suffered adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and presenting complex behaviours. There is also a school on the same site.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in May 2014. She is suitably qualified.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 February 2020

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: 15 August 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/08/2018	Full	Outstanding
25/04/2017	Full	Good
16/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
31/05/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are happy and settled. Staff invest in children and genuinely care about them. Children spoke positively about the care that they receive and their relationships with staff.

Children take part in a wide and varied range of social, leisure and educational activities. Staff continually encourage children to try new things. This helps children to develop new hobbies and interests, grow in confidence and build on their social skills. Staff take pride in, and celebrate, children's achievements. Children's self-esteem improves as a result.

Staff work hard to ensure that children spend regular time with those who matter most to them. Staff will ensure that they arrange their time off so that they are available to support a child to see their family. Social workers have confidence in the registered manager and staff to make appropriate arrangements for children to see their relatives. As a result, children strengthen their relationships with family and friends. This improves their sense of identity.

Staff promote children's physical and emotional health. Children attend regular health appointments. When necessary, staff seek advice from specialist services. This provides children with expert guidance on issues such as their emotional well-being.

Children are at the heart of staff practice. Their views are considered in the day-to-day running of the home. Children take part in weekly meetings to decide on activities and review their progress. The communal areas of the home environment are warm and welcoming and there are displays of children's art work and photographs. However, children's bedrooms require redecoration. Additionally, children's beds are unkempt and do not provide children with a nurturing personal space. This does not provide children with the message that staff care for them and that they are valued.

Staff make sure that children's views are central to the formulation of their care plans. Staff work closely with children to help them to understand their specific targets and the support available to achieve them. This integrated approach to meeting children's needs means that children make sustained progress.

Children's transitions into and from the home are well organised. Seven children have moved on to foster care since the last inspection. Staff work with foster carers and support children well through what could be an anxious time. This well-planned approach helps children to settle quickly.

Children are provided with beautiful memory books which capture the time that they have spent at the home. Staff take time to personalise these books and they reflect children's personalities and interests.

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

Staff understand the risks that children face. Highly effective, proactive planning identifies potential risks and ensures that staff manage these very effectively, both inside and outside of the home. Staff set clear and consistent boundaries. Staff help children to identify what makes them feel angry or upset and to develop techniques that they can use when they feel like this. Risk assessments also provide clear guidance for staff about how they should support children.

A full-time psychotherapist has worked at the home since July 2019 and undertakes direct work with children as well as providing consultations to staff. Staff told the inspector how the therapist has helped them to understand children's complex behaviour. Consequently, they feel better able to meet children's individual needs. As a result of the direct work undertaken with children, two children have made significant disclosures about their early experiences.

Staff use physical restraint only as a last resort, to prevent an immediate risk of significant harm. Instead, staff place emphasis on verbal de-escalation. This approach further enhances children's feelings of safety and security.

Children receive rewards and praise for positive behaviour. They enjoy setting weekly targets alongside staff and take pride when these are met. Despite this good practice, the use of financial penalties for some children has been excessive and the effectiveness of such measures has not been considered. This means that some children have been required to pay unreasonable amounts of money from their pocket money each week to cover the cost of damage to items in the home. During the inspection, managers reflected on this practice and informed the inspector that they would no longer use financial penalties and would instead use restorative approaches.

Three new staff have been recruited since the last inspection. Managers ensure that recruitment processes are safe and robust. This protects children from unsafe adults.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is currently away from the home. The home is being managed by the deputy manager under the supervision of the area manager. The deputy manager intends to make an application to become registered with Ofsted.

The staff team is established, experienced and diverse. As a result, children have access to staff with a range of expertise. Staff know children well. Staff either hold the required level 3 diploma or are currently working to achieve this. Plans are in place to ensure that they complete this within the required timescales. Staff complete child-specific training that informs their practice and meets children's individual and diverse needs.

Staff said they feel supported by managers and enjoy their role. They receive frequent supervision, but this does not always provide them with the opportunity to reflect on their practice. During the inspection, managers acknowledged this shortfall and informed the inspector that they wanted to develop a supervision template to use with staff which would promote and encourage reflective practice.

Overall, children's records are individualised and capture their needs. However, some are not accurate and other records are not signed and dated. This prevents the reader from being able to know when some incidents have occurred and therefore consider how significant the information is.

Managers understand children's needs well and they scrutinise their progress. This has a significant and positive influence on the progress that children make and the support that they receive. Despite this, managers have on occasions failed to oversee aspects of behaviour management within the home. This has resulted in inconsistencies in the consequences given to children, for example, when they damage something.

Staff work effectively with a range of other professionals. These include social workers, school staff and health professionals. As a result, children benefit from coordinated care and make good progress. A social worker told the inspector, 'Staff keep me updated. We work really well together.'

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
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for Children. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(2)(c)(i))	10/04/2020
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. (Regulation 19 (1))	10/04/2020
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of the measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes the effectiveness and any consequences of the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b)(3)(a)(vii))	10/04/2020
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	10/04/2020

Recommendations

- Many children placed in homes may undergo a difficult transition and what should be simple aspects of their care take on a substantial significance in this context.

Staff should provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive, and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. Homes must also meet children's basic day to day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

This specifically relates to adults supporting children to ensure that their bedrooms are nicely kept.

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, 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. Professionally qualified staff employed by the home, e.g. teachers or social workers, should be provided with relevant professional or clinical supervision by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC005048

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

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

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Beverley Hancock

Inspector

Annemarie Parker, Social Care Inspector

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