

SC021679

Registered provider: The Partnership of Care Today Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to four children who are experiencing social and emotional difficulties and learning disabilities.

There are two registered managers, one of whom registered with Ofsted in 2010 and the other in 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 June 2021

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: 20 June 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/06/2019	Full	Good
01/11/2018	Full	Good
28/06/2017	Full	Outstanding
07/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from strong relationships with staff who know them well. Staff are persistent in trying to build positive relationships with families and support the children's appropriate friendships. As a result, children are comfortable in their home and have positive networks outside it.

Attendance and engagement in education are integral to the culture in the home. Staff have high aspirations for each child and advocate for them in education meetings. This has a huge impact on the children's self-esteem and confidence. One child said, 'Staff have really made me believe in myself.' As a result, children are making progress and opportunities for their futures are increased. One child is currently applying to go to university.

Children feel they can be themselves and all their individual and cultural needs are met. Staff focus on supporting children to build skills to allow them to be more independent in the future. One child is currently learning to drive, and staff are supporting her to save money to buy a car. These skills mean that children who move on are well prepared.

Children are supported by staff to improve their health. Health assessments have taken place and external professionals have completed direct work. However, not all staff have read the findings of the assessments. This reduces the ability of staff to individualise the care for each child based on expert recommendations.

Children enjoy various activities, including paintballing, basketball, going to the beach and exercising in the gym. Staff provide consistent care and have remained committed since the last inspection, despite the difficulties that COVID-19 has brought.

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

Children are safe and feel well cared for. Staff are curious about the events in each child's life and regularly discuss the best ways to support each child. Staff keep in regular contact with children when they are out with friends. When needed, staff follow the plans to ensure that children are safe by searching local areas and bringing them home.

Staff are unclear about the escalation processes to follow if a child is at risk of exploitation. Staff take steps to keep children safe, but clear direction is not reflected in the risk-management plans. Although this is not currently having an impact on the safety of the children, it has the potential to do so.

Children are encouraged to choose their own incentive plans and sanctions. Where children have been too harsh on themselves, managers have recommended

sanctions that are more restorative, evidencing a focus on making positive change rather than being punitive. This means that children are more invested in, and open to, reflection and learning.

Staff are trained in de-escalation and are effective in preventing incidents from escalating. One child said, 'Staff are really good at helping us when there is conflict.' Restraint is only used when necessary and is recorded clearly. Managers take time to reflect with each child and staff member. Any complaints made by children are recorded and reported appropriately.

Children are supported with their emotional health. Staff sensitively help each child to access support from local mental health teams. When children have said they do not want to attend appointments, staff have encouraged them and supported them to go. Strategies agreed with children help them to communicate their level of need. One example of this is a child using 'mood signs' to show when they need more support.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has two child-focused registered managers who work together closely. Both managers encourage an environment where children and staff feel supported. One staff member said, 'If I have a problem or I'm unsure of anything, I ask a manager and it is resolved. If I fall behind, it is challenged appropriately.' This means that a committed staff team is providing consistent care to the children.

The team regularly comes together in team meetings and supervisions to discuss current plans and goals for children. Staff predict events that children may struggle with, and proactively plan support around them. As a result, children feel that staff know them well.

Managers actively include children in the decisions made in the home. Children's bedrooms are currently being redecorated after seeking their views. Parents and professionals also feel involved in the children's care. One parent said, 'I can't think of anything that could be improved.' This leads to better outcomes for each child as all are working together to achieve the same aims.

Managers make efforts to advocate for the children, but monitoring systems lack evaluation of the bigger picture. On occasion, external professionals have not completed their role effectively. Managers have not always followed escalation processes until an outcome is achieved.

There is clear planning around children moving into and out of the home. Children are invited to visit the home and choose whether it is where they would like to live. Children do not move out until an appropriate placement is found to meet their needs. One independent reviewing officer said, 'Staff have ensured that [Name of child] can stay with them, because that's the right thing for her until she moves on. They have done everything with integrity.'

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, the 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii))</p> <p>This relates specifically to staff being aware of the safeguarding procedures they must follow if a child is at risk of exploitation, and ensuring that plans reflect current working practice and risk is reviewed appropriately.</p>	13 August 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child's needs (see regulations 5(c)). The registered person should consider the use of an independent advocate (see paragraph 4.16) if the child's needs are not being met. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to respond to the health needs of children, help children to manage long-term conditions and where necessary meet specific individual health needs arising from a disability, chronic condition or other complex needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.12)

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: SC021679

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Partnership of Care Today Limited

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

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered managers: Nigel Evans, Marc Harland

Inspectors

Sylvia Eboigbe, Social Care Inspector

Carly Quinn, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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