

SC005045

Registered provider: The Partnership of Care Today

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 for up to three children who have experienced childhood instability, resulting in trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since November 2014 and holds a level 4 qualification in leadership and management.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 5 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/12/2019	Full	Good
06/12/2018	Full	Good
06/02/2018	Full	Good
28/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

At the time of this inspection, there was one child living at the home. The child is making some good progress from their starting point. Two children who previously lived at the home have moved out. One child's move was successful and in line with their care plan. However, staff were unable to meet the other child's needs and keep him safe. As a result, the child moved out of the home earlier than anticipated.

Despite children making some good progress, too many shortfalls have a negative impact on their day-to-day experiences.

The home is not always well maintained. Although children's bedrooms are clean, staff do not ensure that other aspects of the home are welcoming. For example, the garden area is unkempt and repairs have not been completed in a timely manner. For instance, there is damage to an interior wall and a lock on a window, and a toilet flush button needs to be repaired. This poor practice creates an institutional feel rather than a homely environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for children to attend school. When children have not been in school, staff have liaised with children's teachers and social workers to ensure that the impact of school absence on the child's learning and development is minimal. However, staff do not yet understand the barriers to one child's learning. Because of this, the strategies used to improve school attendance can be ineffective.

Staff support children to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to improve their well-being. In the main, staff support children to attend routine and specialist appointments. However, staff did not sufficiently support one child who was not keen on attending a general practitioner check-up and seek advice from the doctor.

Staff develop positive relationships with children. Some staff have a good understanding of childhood trauma and children's complex behaviours. They respond well to children's needs. As a result of staff showing good knowledge and resilience, children develop trusting relationships and positive self-esteem.

Staff have good relationships with children's families. They have a good understanding of family dynamics and why these relationships are important to children. This supports children to stay in touch with important individuals in their lives. As a result, children's emotional well-being is improved and they retain a sense of identity with their families.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have supported children to participate in a range of leisure and recreational activities. For example, children enjoyed playing

football and golf, and visiting the seaside. This promotes children's physical and emotional well-being.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager and staff do not always fully consider and minimise potential risks to children. Each child has an individual risk assessment. However, these documents are not always comprehensive and regularly updated. For example, when children go missing from the home, staff do not have guidance and advice on when they should contact the police. This means staff are unclear of the correct protocol and do not have a consistent approach when children go missing from the home.

Overall, staff ensure that behaviour plans are detailed and include guidance about how to manage risks to children. However, the registered manager does not always ensure that assessments accurately reflect the correct information. For example, one child's risk assessment failed to give guidance and rationale as to why the child's social media activity is not monitored, despite the child's vulnerabilities. This has the potential to expose the child to further risk of harm.

Staff give time and attention to children to have important conversations with them about a range of topics, including physical education, healthy lifestyle and personal hygiene. However, staff did not have in-depth discussions with one child about internet safety and gang affiliation. Furthermore, when concerns arose, it was not explained to the child how he was at risk from exploitation. Consequently, this did not support the child in understanding how to keep himself safe.

Staff do not always show professional curiosity and vigilance. For example, on several occasions, staff failed to monitor a child's electronic devices when there was a potential risk of exploitation. This has the potential to leave vulnerable children at risk of harm.

Incidents of restraint are few and are always a last resort. The registered manager and staff implement strategies well to de-escalate children's behaviours. Staff have a good understanding of their behavioural management policies. Children benefit from this approach and this contributes to their positive experiences.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Leadership and management of the home are not yet consistently good. However, the registered manager is passionate about providing a good quality of care to the children. She works closely with external professionals and feedback is generally positive. These partnerships mean that children feel secure and know that everyone has their best interests at heart.

The home's statement of purpose has not been updated to accurately reflect changes to the staff team. The registered manager has taken action to address this shortfall.

The registered manager does not always use her monitoring and review systems effectively. For example, she has failed to ensure that staff have clear guidance and advice when children go missing from the home. The registered manager acknowledged this shortfall.

Staff provide positive feedback and confirm they are well supported by the registered manager. They benefit from regular team meetings. However, the quality and frequency of staff supervision is variable. Furthermore, the registered manager does not always use supervision effectively to monitor staff progress and professional development. This does not promote staff learning and improve practice within the home.

All staff who work in the home have the necessary qualifications to meet children's needs. They have completed their level 3 diploma qualification in residential childcare within the specified timescale. Consequently, all the staff who care for children are suitably qualified.

Restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on face-to-face training for staff. However, the registered manager has ensured that staff continue to receive refresher training. This means that staff have sufficient knowledge and skills when providing care to children.

The registered manager has good partnership working with others. This includes family members and social workers. Children benefit from this tailored support, which has a positive impact on their progress.

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding.</p> <p>(Regulation 11 (1)(b) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(v))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that they support children to keep safe.</p>	24 December 2021
<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>	24 December 2021

<p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(d))</p> <p>This particularly refers to staff ensuring that risk assessments are up to date. It also relates to ensuring all aspects of the home are welcoming.</p>	
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(h))</p> <p>This particularly refers to the registered manager ensuring they use internal monitoring systems more effectively.</p>	24 December 2021
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>This particularly refers to the registered manager ensuring that children are supported when moving from the home.</p>	24 December 2021
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p>	24 December 2021

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience.
(Regulation 33 (4) (a)(b))

This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that all staff receive regular reflective supervision.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home's statement of purpose is reviewed and updated. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have an understanding of relevant health services, support children to navigate these services and advocate on their behalf. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.8)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the barriers to children's learning and ensure the appropriate support is provided. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.3)

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: SC005045

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered Provider: The Partnership of Care Today

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

Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered manager: Emma Coen

Inspector

Patrick McIntosh, Social Care Inspector

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