

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 with 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.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2022

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: 29 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/06/2021	Full	Good
20/06/2019	Full	Good
01/11/2018	Full	Good
28/06/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Two children told the inspector that they were happy living at the home. The children were able to reflect on their time here and believed that staff had brought them stability in their lives. Children have made progress in their education, self-esteem, social skills, independence skills and emotional well-being. A child said that staff 'have supported me every step of the way. They never give up on me.'

Children are supported when moving in. However, the manager has not identified or assessed risks in the local area, such as the home's proximity to busy roads, a railway line and bridges. Also, the manager and staff are not aware of the local offer which sets out the support available for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is a missed opportunity to access additional resources for children.

The staff have the skills and confidence to communicate and engage with the children positively. As a result, children enjoy warm and trusting relationships with them. A child said that staff 'are fantastic and go out of their way for me, such as making sure that I see my family as often as possible'.

The manager and staff make sure that the children get the support that they need to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and life. Children are involved in every aspect of their care, including exploring where they would like to live in the future and what colleges they would like to attend. Therefore, children understand the plans for them and can influence any decisions made.

Before coming to live at this home, the children had poor attendance at school. Staff have encouraged and supported the children to return to education and their outcomes have significantly improved. As a result, one child has taken his exams and is completing more exams at college. Children are motivated to learn and to do well and staff encourage and support the children's ambitions. One child said that they want to be a social worker and another child would like to work in information technology.

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

Children have a strong sense of safety and well-being. Staff's safeguarding practice means that children are protected from harm. Since coming to live at the home, the children have become significantly safer. They make positive choices to stay away from negative influences. However, staff are not complacent and understand the children's vulnerabilities and risks. Staff know what they must do when they are concerned about the children's safety at home or out in the community.

Staff are trained in safeguarding and additional areas such as child sexual exploitation, county lines, e-safety and radicalisation. This means that they have the skills and knowledge to observe and identify any potential concern.

Staff alert social workers and safeguarding professionals when they have a concern about a child. Staff and children have the opportunity to reflect on any incidents and give their views on the matter. In addition to this, staff make sure that the children understand their rights and entitlements. The children know what to do if they are unhappy or wish to complain. They have several adults independent of the home they can talk to if they have any concerns.

Children have been reported missing from home, but there has been a significant reduction in these incidents in the last year. Missing-from-home procedures are in place, which staff understand and follow. Staff work in partnership with other agencies responsible for safeguarding, including the police. Independent return home interviews are provided to help gain a greater understanding of the reasons why children go missing.

Good recruitment and selection processes ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Regular health and safety checks mean that the home environment is physically safe and secure.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The two managers are an effective leadership team. They place the welfare of the children at the centre of everything that they and the staff do. Everyone is ambitious for the children to be happy and to be able to reach their full potential. The managers use the views of the children and the people in the children's lives to help them understand what is working well and what needs to improve.

Staff follow children's plans and regularly review them. Staff have strong relationships with partner agencies and work together effectively to identify and meet the children's needs consistently.

The managers said that recruiting new staff had been difficult throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions. However, they have successfully recruited some new staff, and recruitment is high on their agenda for the next few months. Children said that they know all the staff well. This means that children receive continuity of care.

The home's workforce plan does not highlight the timescales for staff supervision and there are some gaps in the managers and staff receiving supervision in a timely way. This does not ensure that they can discuss their practice or development needs. However, managers and staff use monthly team meetings effectively to reflect on the children's progress and as opportunities for training and sharing skills and good practice.

Most of the staff hold a recognised childcare qualification, and other staff are at different stages of completing a qualification. Staff enjoy their work and they work well together as a team.

The manager and staff work collaboratively with a range of agencies and professionals who are involved in the children's care. A social worker said, 'I could not ask for more. Staff are really helpful and communication is brilliant.' When services have been slow to respond or are not available, the manager has challenged the shortfalls effectively. This means that the children receive the services that they need in a timely manner.

The manager uses internal monitoring and review systems to have a detailed understanding of the effect that the quality of care is having on the children's progress and experiences. The manager uses this understanding to inform practice and find new and better ways to support the children.

Generally, external monitoring is adequate but lacks evaluation. In addition, it is difficult for the regulator to track progress for individual children due to how the reports are written.

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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that the home's location risk assessment identifies all risks in the local and surrounding area. Further to this, that these risks are considered in impact risk assessments when children are moving in.</p>	30 January 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that managers and staff are aware of the local offer setting out the support available for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.4)
- The registered person should ensure that supervision is carried out in line with the workforce development plan. Further to this, the workforce plan should highlight the arrangements for supervision for all staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home. Specifically, external monitoring should clearly evaluate the information in the report and be specific on which child they are discussing. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: 2nd Floor, Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road,
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Responsible individual: Vivien Snape

Registered managers: Nigel Evans
Marc Harland

Inspector

Pam Nuckley, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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