

# SC005048

Registered provider: Partnership of Care Today

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is situated in a remote area and is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care for up to eight children who may have experienced childhood instability resulting in trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The registered manager holds a level 5 qualification in leadership and management for residential care services for children.

The home is on the same site as the school. The inspector only inspected the social care provision.

### Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 2022

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>requires improvement to be good</b>
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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:** 7 September 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/09/2021	Full	Good
20/02/2020	Full	Good
15/08/2018	Full	Outstanding
25/04/2017	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

In the main, children are healthy, and staff support children to attend routine and specialist health appointments. However, staff do not support children's health needs consistently well. On one occasion, staff did not take prompt action when a child injured their hand and this delayed the child receiving medical treatment. In addition, the registered manager was unaware of a health condition that a child has listed in their plans. Not finding out more about this issue may impact on the care of the child. Children use weighted blankets for comfort and reassurance. The registered manager has not considered the children's individual weight and height before using the blankets as per NHS guidance and guidance set out in the children's individual risk assessments. Consequently, the blankets could be limiting children's movement more than originally intended.

Most children spoke warmly of their relationships with the staff who look after them and told inspectors that they can talk to staff about things that worry them. When children talk about things that they say have happened to them in the past, it is not always clear how they are kept up to date about what has happened with this information.

Staff help children to manage their relationships with each other. However, this is not always effective and on occasions children have hurt each other. Work to support children to be kind to each other is ongoing.

The general areas of the home are well maintained and nicely furnished, and provide welcoming spaces that feel homely. Some children's bedrooms are also bright and personalised spaces for children to enjoy. However, others require attention because they are not well kept and are in need of decoration. Some children need additional storage for their belongings. Plans are in place to decorate children's bedrooms.

Staff do not always check on children after they have gone to bed to ensure they are okay or asleep and safe in their rooms. A child had slept on the floor on the night prior to day one of the inspection and upturned some bedroom furniture. Staff were unaware of this until the following day when the inspector looked around the home.

There are eight children living in the home. One child has moved into the home since the last inspection. This was a planned move and the child visited and met staff and children before moving in. The registered manager assessed the child's needs before offering them a place to live. Good planning helps to alleviate children's anxieties.

The registered manager and staff help children to understand their care plans. One child spoke to an inspector about their plan, which is to find a foster family. Another child spoke about his plans to move to another children's home in the organisation that is connected to the secondary school he will move to. Keeping children informed and enabling them to contribute to their plans helps them to prepare for transitions and promotes positive endings.

Children experience stability and have developed traditions that they enjoy and look forward to. For example, they were looking forward to wearing new matching Christmas pyjamas and having surprises in their Christmas Eve boxes.

Children attend the school that is part of the same organisation and situated on the same site as the home. Children's attendance at school improves from their starting points and they make progress with their learning.

Staff encourage children to take part in activities that they enjoy. All children attend swimming lessons, and some children have joined other groups such as dancing and Cubs. This provides children with opportunities to regularly meet other children in the community and develop social networks while having fun.

Staff are creative in capturing children's experiences in colourfully decorated and personalised memory books that children take with them when they leave. This helps children to capture their life journey and promotes their identity.

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

On two occasions, the registered manager has not notified Ofsted of allegations that needed investigating. On both occasions, the allegations were specific to care children received before they came to live in the home. On another other occasion, a child who has since moved on from the home reported concerns specific to the care they experienced while living there. Although the concerns are being investigated by people independent of the home, the registered manager is not clear about the status of the investigations or how they are progressing. As a result, the registered manager is not keeping abreast of important information that may impact on the care and welfare of children.

When the responsible individual does consider complaints raised about the service or undertakes an internal investigation at the request of the local authority designated officer, she does not keep clear records of the investigation she has carried out. Consequently, it is not always clear how she has reached her conclusions.

Staff promote positive behaviours through praise and rewards and children are supported to reflect on their behaviours. Children's behaviours and risks that cause concern reduce. For example, children's levels of aggression have fallen. Records of consequences used by staff are not always detailed, which makes it difficult to evaluate if the consequence given is proportionate. For example, records do not

describe the chores that staff ask children to complete and the time taken to do them.

On occasion, staff restrain children to keep them and other people safe. The registered manager ensures that staff are trained to use restraint safely and only as a last resort. Records of restraint are generally good. However, on one occasion, there was no record of reflection completed with the child who was restrained. Not recording the child's views does not promote learning for staff.

The registered manager has some systems in place to reduce the risk of fire. Firefighting equipment is sited around the home and there is a fire alarm system. Fire doors are used in the main living spaces, however, these are not always well maintained, which could compromise their effectiveness in the event of a fire.

When children use the internet, they are supervised by staff, in a way which is appropriate to their age and stage of development. This reduces the risk of children experiencing online abuse and exploitation.

No children have gone missing since the last inspection.

The registered manager has effective recruitment systems in place, which reduce the risk of children been cared for by unsuitable individuals.

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

Shortfalls in the handling and recording of complaints and allegations contribute to the requires improvement judgement in leadership and management.

Monitoring systems used by the registered manager do not always identify areas that need to be addressed and improved. This limits the continued development of the home and the quality of care provided to children.

There has been one occasion when the independent person commissioned to visit the home on a monthly basis has not done so, and instead the person gathered information remotely. This practice reduces the effectiveness of the independent oversight of the home.

The registered manager has a good understanding of the children's needs. Children respond well to her nurturing approach and they remain her focus when making decisions. Staff share her vision for the home and are keen to promote positive childhood experiences.

Staff speak highly of the support they receive from managers. Regular supervision provides them with a safe space to reflect on practice and understand the care needs of children who live in the home.

The registered manager ensures that staff receive an annual performance review. As a result, some staff have been promoted and some have started additional training that will help them to achieve qualifications in counselling, social work or therapeutic skills.

An experienced and consistent staff team looks after children who live in the home. Most staff hold a relevant qualification or are working towards this. The registered manager ensures that staff receive regular training to support their role and that is specific to the needs of the children who live in the home. For example, staff have completed training in autism. This helps staff to understand the specific needs of children and to adapt their plans to ensure children's needs can be met.

## 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>protect and promote each child's welfare;</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)9ii)(c)(i))</p> <p>This is specific to ensuring that all children's bedrooms are a welcoming space for children to enjoy and that staff check on children who struggle to settle at night.</p>	28 February 2023
<p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>The health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and</p> <p>children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p>	28 February 2023

<p>that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(c))</p> <p>In particular, the registered manager must ensure that staff seek medical advice and treatment for children without delay, that they properly assess the use of weighted blankets, and familiarise themselves with one child's health condition, to ensure that the child is receiving all the necessary support.</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>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</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)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered manager must maintain good oversight of all safeguarding concerns. Independent visitors must visit the home at least once a month. The manager must ensure that fire doors are repaired quickly. In addition, ensure that consequences are fully recorded and that children have timely debriefs following restraint incidents, and that debriefs are recorded.</p>	<p>28 February 2023</p>
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse and neglect; and</p> <p>sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular—</p>	<p>28 February 2023</p>



Provide for liaison and cooperation with any local authority which are, or may be, making a child protection enquiry in relation to a child accommodated in the home;

provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response.

(Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(d))

In particular, ensure that the registered person maintains good communication with relevant professionals about the progress of any investigation into allegations made by, or involving, children at the home. In addition, ensure that clear records are kept about actions taken in response to allegations and their subsequent investigation.

## Recommendations

- The registered person should support children to develop understanding and empathy towards each other. In particular, continue to work with children on their relationships with each other and continue to work to mitigate risk of children hurting each other. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality Standards', page 39, paragraph 8.11.)

## 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:** 2nd Floor, Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road,  
Stockport, Cheshire SK2 6LR

**Responsible individual:** Vivien Snape

**Registered manager:** Beverley Hancock

## Inspectors

Helen Malanaphy, Social Care Inspector  
Chanel Bryant, Social Care Inspector

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