

1271135

Registered provider: Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home is registered to care for up to five children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager post has been vacant since April 2019. A new manager is in post and has applied to Ofsted for registration.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 June 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 27 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/06/2018	Full	Good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Children should be actively encouraged to read their records and to add further information about them. They should be regularly reminded of their right to see information about them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.6) Specifically, paper files should contain up-to-date plans and assessments for young people to access.
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive regular 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 in their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2) Specifically, that arrangements should be in place for the supervision of staff in the absence of the line manager.
- A record of supervision must be kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should:
 - detail the necessary management and staffing structure; the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff to enable the delivery of the home's statement of purpose;
 - detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training;
 - detail the process for managing and improving poor performance;
 - detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice and keep appropriate records for staff in the home.

The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and be used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home's manager. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

- Homes are required to develop and keep under review a "Statement of Purpose" (regulation 16 and schedule 1). The home's Statement of Purpose should be child-focussed, indicating how the home provides individualised care to meet the Quality Standards for children in their care. ('Guide to the children's homes

regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5) In particular, that the statement of purpose should include the home's model of practice.

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 3.9, page 15) With particular reference to the replacement of young people's bedroom furniture, floor coverings and broken windows.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people receive a good quality of care from staff who are enthusiastic about their role in caring for them. Young people have the right support in place from in and outside the home. This means that they are helped to make good progress in all areas of their life.

Young people have warm, positive relationships with staff. They are able to speak openly about concerns and are encouraged to speak to any staff member. This gives each young person choice and control over who they seek support from.

The educational settings for young people are appropriate to their needs. There is good communication between education providers and the home. One teacher said, 'My pupil has become a different person since they moved to the home. The home has been great with them.'

The home uses a restorative model of practice, although this is not detailed in the statement of purpose. This is the model used by the wider local authority children's services. Social workers seeking to place young people at the home are, therefore, aware of the practice model and can replicate this in their own practice. This provides young people with a consistency of approach.

Where young people are working to understand and accept complex issues about their own identity, they are supported and guided with sensitivity and empathy by staff. Staff work hard to identify additional specialist services which promote young people's emotional well-being and that can provide them with support into adulthood.

Independence is promoted and is integral to care planning. There is also a dedicated 'independence evening' each week where young people take part in an activity to encourage their independence. For example, one young person plans a menu and buys food to cook. Another young person goes out to spend time with friends and family. These activities support young people to develop skills and knowledge which will help them grow into resourceful and confident young adults.

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

Young people are kept safe in the home. Isolated incidents of bullying or use of discriminatory language are swiftly challenged. There is an inclusive culture which recognises and values the differences of each young person.

Staff have a good understanding of whistleblowing and safeguarding procedures and say that they are confident to raise any concerns.

Young people are cared for by staff who know them well. Staff use assessments and plans in place for young people to prevent escalation of any incidents. Staff are clear about the need to review plans regularly in order to support young people and review the progress that they are making.

Staff work hard to support young people through challenging times. They do not give up on young people and do what they can to keep them in placement. Where this is not possible, young people are supported to move on in a positive manner and they are helped to understand the reasons for the placement ending.

The restorative approach of the home is used effectively to resolve conflict. For example, during young people's house meetings, discussions take place with the aim of understanding conflicts and repairing any harm done. As a result of this, sanctions are not used to manage negative behaviours. Instead, there are incentives in place to reward positive behaviours, which are individualised and agreed with each young person.

Where young people may be at risk in the community, the home works to identify and reduce risks as soon as possible. The missing from home officer said, 'I find that the staff ensure that young people are safeguarded. They follow all the correct procedures when a young person goes missing from home.' Where young people have been missing from care, the manager has quickly formed links with other providers to share information. This co-ordinated and focused approach means that young people are more likely to be effectively safeguarded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager post has been vacant since April 2019. A new manager is in post who has applied to Ofsted for registration. The manager and assistant manager are both new to their roles. They come from different professional backgrounds and have complementary experience and knowledge. The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and areas of development of the home.

The wider staff team is relatively new and inexperienced. Staff say that they receive a comprehensive introduction to their role through a planned induction programme. In addition to this, the manager has provided face-to-face input in the home to address specific issues. This is valued by staff and supports them to meet the needs of individual young people. Staff say that they are well supported by the manager and feel able to seek advice whenever needed.

The manager does not currently have a workforce development plan in place. As a result of this, there is no effective oversight or checks on the development of staff.

Staff have not been supervised in line with the authority's supervision policy due to short-term management absence. This means that staff have not been provided with opportunities to reflect on their practice and the progress of young people. Where supervision has taken place, the quality of recording is variable. As a result of this, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate the progress of staff and their ability to meet young people's needs.

Electronic case records for young people are comprehensive and provide staff with the information that they need to care for each young person. The home benefits from sharing recording systems with the wider local authority children's services. This promotes effective information sharing. Paper files that young people can access are not always up to date. This is a potential barrier to young people contributing to their care planning.

The manager has a good knowledge of the needs of young people and the ability of the home to meet these needs. Where young people can no longer be cared for safely in the home, the manager works to ensure that transitions to new settings are positive. The manager works effectively in partnership with external agencies to ensure that young people make progress and are kept safe.

There is some damage to the home. Some windows need replacing. In addition, young people's bedrooms need items of furniture and new flooring. These improvements will contribute to young people having a welcoming and homely environment in which they feel valued.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1271135

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Town Hall, Stockport, Cheshire SK1 3XE

Responsible individual: Jeanette Warburton

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Dawn Parton, social care inspector

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