

2484441

Registered provider: Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by the local authority and offers care for two children who have experienced early childhood instability that has led to trauma and/or associated complex behaviours.

The manager is not currently registered for this home; he has submitted an application to register with Ofsted. He has been registered with Ofsted for another home within the local authority since May 2021. He intends to continue with this registration alongside his application to register as the manager for this home.

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.

There have been no children living in this home between June 2020 and May 2021.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 September 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: 21 May 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/05/2019	Full	Good
11/12/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

One child lives in this home. The child is making good progress from their starting point. Another child, who was previously living at the home, has moved on to live with a new family. This was a planned and successful move.

Children have good school attendance and make good progress in education. The manager and staff worked hard during the school holidays and liaised with all agencies to secure an appropriate school placement. As a result, the child's education and learning have not been disrupted.

Staff demonstrate that they follow children's health plans. These are detailed and individualised to meet children's health needs well. For example, staff provide good support for one child who requires encouragement to eat healthily and take regular exercise. This positive approach means that children are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles.

The managers and staff are passionate and enthusiastic in helping children to make progress, despite the challenges they face. This helps children to form positive relationships with staff. For example, staff make sure that children's views, wishes and opinions are central to the design of their internal and statutory care plans.

Children have plenty of opportunities to participate in activities that support their interests and hobbies. Good planning by staff meant one child could join a boxing and football club soon after moving into the home. These experiences and activities have promoted the child's self-esteem and confidence and helped him develop new social skills.

Staff recognise the importance of family relationships. They are proactive in encouraging children to maintain important relationships, even if children do not always spend time with their family. This supports children to maintain a sense of their identity.

Staff consult children through meetings and one-to-one discussions to help them to express their wishes and feelings. However, this is not always effective. For example, when one child had expressed to staff that he wanted more nutritious meals, this was not explored further by staff. This has the potential for children to feel that they are not listened too.

Children's bedrooms are personalised and comfortable, and the home is welcoming. However, other areas of the home need to be better maintained. For example, the garden area is unkempt, and re-decoration work is unfinished. This has the potential to compromise children's comfort and well-being.

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

Managers and staff ensure that there is a strong safeguarding culture in the home. The child told the inspector that he felt safe in the home. Children feel that they are listened to and respected. Staff understand their own responsibilities for protecting children. This means that any allegations of harm are quickly investigated. This good practice promotes children's safety.

Managers and staff are proactive to manage risk. They have good understanding of children's individual needs and potential risks they may face. Detailed written risk assessments provide staff with good advice and guidance to help them support children's vulnerabilities. Therefore, children receive the right support that keeps them safe.

Children rarely go missing from the home. Staff have the relevant information and know what to do in such an event. Staff maintain close working partnerships with the police and the placing authority so that additional safeguards are brought in if needed.

Staff have a good understanding of a wide range of de-escalation techniques that can help them to distract and manage children's behaviour. As a result, of staff having positive relationships with children, physical restraints have not been necessary in the home for some time.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Children and staff benefit from having an enthusiastic and ambitious manager who has high expectations for both children and staff.

The manager has a good understanding of the therapeutic approach used in the home. He supports staff to implement this approach well, to meet children's needs and help them make sustained progress. As a result, children receive bespoke and reflective care.

Staff speak positively about the support they receive from the manager. In the brief time that the manager has been in post, all staff have had regular supervision. In addition, staff receive a range of training opportunities to help inform their practice and provide ongoing development.

The manager has positive working relationships with other professionals in the wider community. Working proactively with others helps to ensure that children's care plans are achieved. For example, one child moved on successfully and without delay due to the managers actions to work with others and co-ordinate the planned move.

The home has had difficulty with recruiting sufficient core staff to provide care for the children. Consequently, a high number of casual staff have been needed to care for children. This has the potential to impact on their well-being and to compromise

the child's welfare. The manager has taken action to address this shortfall in staffing through triggering a recruitment campaign.

Most staff are qualified with the level 3 diploma in residential childcare. However, managers have failed to ensure that two out of the six staff, who work in the home, have the necessary qualifications. Managers now have a system in place to monitor staff training more effectively.

Overall, the manager uses monitoring and review systems to help him to have a good level of oversight of the home. However, the home's fire precaution work has not been fully completed. Work is ongoing by the local authority to address this shortfall.

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
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(d)(e)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that they have sufficient staff to provide consistent care to the child.	22 October 2021
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ('the Level 3 Diploma'); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.	05 November 2021

(Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))

This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that all staff have the relevant residential childcare qualification.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children's feelings and views are taken in account when planning their dietary needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 4.5)
- The registered person should ensure that adequate precautions against the risk of fire are in place and that the fire risk assessment is kept up to date. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that all aspect of the home provide a nurturing environment to children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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: 2484441

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: City of Stoke-on-Trent, Swann House, Boothem Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 4SY

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Patrick McIntosh, Social Care Inspector

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