

# 2484586

Registered provider: Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is run by the local authority. It provides care for up to two children who have experienced early childhood trauma.

The manager has been registered since September 2020.

### Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2022

|                                                                                           |             |
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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
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|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 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:** 6 July 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 06/07/2021      | Full            | Good                 |
| 10/12/2019      | Full            | Good                 |
| 15/01/2019      | Full            | Good                 |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home. One child had moved out of the home sooner than anticipated. However, this was a planned and well-managed move, where staff supported the child to move to live with family members. Children are making some progress from their starting points.

The transition for the one child moving into the home was well planned. The registered managers ensured that they received all the information required to inform the care process. This meant that the child moving into the home was prepared and felt welcomed.

Relationships between one child and staff have improved since the last inspection, which is having a more positive impact on the child's lived experiences and progress. One child told the inspector that they liked living at the home and that staff provided a good quality of care. They said that they missed some staff who were away from work.

Staff continue to work closely alongside the in-house clinical team and other professionals to provide children with specialist and informed care. For example, staff receive bespoke training on the therapeutic model and are committed to developing their practice in the model. This helps them provide good care to meet children's emotional needs. As a result, children are better supported to manage their emotions and reflect on their behaviours and choices.

Staff work hard to ensure that children's health needs are met to a good standard. Children have individual health assessments, and the recommendations from health plans are acted upon. However, when children have missed routine appointments with the dentist, general practitioner or optician, staff do not always pursue these. As a result, children's health needs are not always monitored effectively.

Staff support children well to maintain important and positive relationships with family members. They communicate effectively with social workers to review the arrangements for children to spend time with their families. Staff show a very good understanding of the importance of children spending meaningful time with their families. As a result, children benefit emotionally from this care and understanding.

Overall, the physical environment of the home is welcoming, comfortable and nurturing. Children have more pride in their bedrooms and are encouraged to personalise them with different themes, in line with their wishes. There is some minor maintenance work to be completed inside the home. However, the registered manager has plans to address this.

Despite this positive progress, children's educational progress is poor. Staff do not support one child successfully with their education. This child is not doing well or

making good progress with their learning and school attendance. In addition, not enough has been done to support this child, who is not attending school regularly and has made limited progress. For example, when the child is not in school, staff have not completed sufficient work to support them with alternative learning. Consequently, this limits the child's opportunities and development.

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

The registered manager has improved how they assess risk and impact when new children move into the home. Staff ensure that all known risks are identified, and they also consider the impact of the risks in relation to the location of the home. Managers carefully consider how the new children's behaviour may affect the other children already living at the home before they move in. This level of scrutiny resulted in a better understanding of known risk when one child recently moved into the home.

Some staff show a better degree of knowledge regarding children's vulnerabilities. They use the learning and support from the in-house clinical services well to identify emerging needs and risks to children. This learning improves their practice to protect children.

Staff are skilled in supporting children with their behaviours. They know how to de-escalate behaviours which may become challenging or potentially harmful. Restraints are used proportionately when there is a risk or serious concern about children's or staff's safety. Furthermore, staff ensure incidents are recorded accurately. This means that the registered manager can review all physical interventions, using records that contain all the relevant information.

Children rarely go missing from home. On the occasions when they do, staff are responsive and follow children's missing-from-home protocols successfully. Staff escalate concerns by working in partnership with the local authority, local services and the police to ensure that children are returned home safely. This means that risks to children in the community are vastly reduced.

Staff's professional curiosity about the safety of children in their care has improved. Staff are more inquisitive about children's use of their devices and mobile phones and undertake some checks. However, this has not gone far enough and, on occasions, staff have not completed regular checks. This lack of action makes children more vulnerable to harm when online.

Overall, staff use praise and reward to encourage children to display positive behaviour. This has been effective on occasions. However, on one occasion, a consequence used was punitive rather than restorative in nature. For example, one child was expected to contribute from their pocket money towards the cost of repairs to damage to the home. This does not help children to recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community.

Medication practices in the home are not always safe. For example, staff do not ensure that medication is administered as prescribed to the child. There have been repeated occasions when staff have administered medication to the children incorrectly. On one occasion, a child was given an overdose. On this occasion, the child did not experience an adverse reaction.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has identified the strengths and weaknesses at the home. An action plan is ongoing to address areas for improvement. This leadership approach means that shortfalls are acted on quickly, which improves children's progress and experiences. Requirements raised at the previous inspection have been deemed met at this inspection.

The registered manager has an in-depth understanding of the therapeutic approach used at the home. She continues to create a positive culture at the home. This enables staff to support children to make progress physically, socially and emotionally.

Children know how to make a complaint. The registered manager is quick to review information, act on complaints and investigate. She provides feedback to children and staff about the outcomes of investigations. As a result, children feel listened to and that their views are important. They also know that the registered manager will take complaints seriously.

Overall, staff provide positive feedback and confirm they are well supported by the registered manager. Staff benefit from regular reflective team meetings. In addition, the registered manager uses supervision sessions effectively, to monitor staff progress and professional development. This means staff development and learning are actively promoted and improve practice at the home.

Staff and the registered manager develop and maintain positive working relationships with local services, children's families and external professionals. This further improves the experiences and quality of care children receive.

The registered manager does not always ensure that staff have the skills and training to meet the needs of the children. For example, not all staff have received bespoke training on understanding children's emotional well-being and mental health needs. In addition, the inspector found that some staff had not received training on child sexual exploitation and safeguarding. Knowledge and skills in these areas are relevant to meet the needs of children at the home. This lack of training leaves staff without the necessary knowledge base and ability to care for children effectively.

Staff do not always have a good understanding of how to support children with their mental health. For example, staff have not provided a consistent approach when children have difficulties in managing or regulating their emotions. This has resulted in situations escalating for longer periods, with children becoming further distressed.

Although the registered manager has taken some action to address this practice, this has not gone far enough to change this culture completely at the home.

## 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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally.<br/>(Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(v))</p> <p>This particularly refers to the registered manager and staff ensuring that children are supported to overcome barriers to their learning.</p> | 27 January 2023 |
| <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>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 27 January 2023 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <p>the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(e))</p> <p>This particularly refers to the registered manager ensuring that staff have a consistent approach in managing children's behaviours.</p> <p>It also relates to the registered manager ensuring that all staff receive essential training to meet the needs of children.</p>      |                        |
| <p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p> <p>In particular the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and</p> <p>a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, the registered manager must ensure that medication protocol is followed, and recording is accurate.</p> | <p>27 January 2023</p> |

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff have sufficient understanding of relevant health services, and should support children to navigate these services, advocating on their behalf where necessary and appropriate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.8)
- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)



- The registered person should ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming. 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

## **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:** 2484586

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Stoke-on-Trent City Council

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

**Responsible individual:** Tracey Docksey

**Registered manager:** Medan Case-Peart

## Inspectors

Patrick McIntosh, Social Care Inspector  
Carl Wilton, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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