

2538287

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

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

A new manager started working at the home in May 2020 and is registered with Ofsted.

Visit dates: 4 to 5 November 2020

Previous inspection date: 12 November 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

There is currently one young person living in the home. Staff provide her with good-quality and individualised care to meet her needs. There are no plans for another young person to move into the home, due to the level of needs of the current young person.

Staff turnover has been high, due to a new staff team joining the home in May 2020. Two staff members remained, who the young person has trusting relationships with. This has provided her with some consistency.

The young person has a personalised care plan that staff keep under review. Staff seek the young person's views, which are considered within plans as far as possible.

The young person is supported to develop her independence skills. She has also been supported to prepare for parenthood. The manager, in collaboration with a local university, has provided the young person with access to many relevant childcare courses. This has helped prepare the young person to care for her unborn child. The young person was very positive about this opportunity and the learning she has taken from these courses.

The young person has access to, and engages with, universal health services. Staff support the young person to attend all health appointments to ensure that her and her unborn child's health needs are met. Furthermore, the young person has access to the services that she needs to promote her emotional well-being.

Staff support the young person to engage in 15 hours learning per week. This constitutes a significant improvement. The alternative education provision provides the young person with a tailored package of learning. She has been able to achieve qualifications in English and mathematics. The young person now places value on learning and aspires.

Staff have supported the young person to understand the impact of COVID-19. Staff have supported the young person to stay in contact with her family throughout the period of social restrictions.

The safety of children

Staff have a good understanding of the young person's vulnerabilities and potential to place herself at risk. Staff ensure that there are appropriate levels of supervision inside and outside of the home to reflect the young person's vulnerability.

Risk assessments are very detailed, thorough and updated regularly. They identify risk of harm, any known triggers and outline ways to ensure the young person's safety. Staff do not always sign to say they have read and understood risk assessments. Despite this, staff understand risks well and respond immediately to ensure that the young person is safe.

The young person understands the boundaries in her home. She receives praise and encouragement. For example, engaging with professionals to reduce risk to herself and her unborn child. The young person receives rewards in different ways, such as a takeaway of her choice or extra treats when shopping.

Staff have not had to use physical interventions during the period of monitoring. Staff use their positive relationships with the young person to de-escalate any incidents and reduce risk of harm.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager and his assistant care manager have been in role since May 2020. They have made positive improvements since the last inspection. All three requirements previously raised are met. Managers have good oversight and are clear on where improvement is required.

Managers ensure that staff receive regular supervision and support. However, these are not consistently signed by the supervisor or supervisee. Regular team meetings also take place. Both of these provide staff with the opportunity to discuss the young person's care in detail and to reflect on practice.

Staff have access to training and, during COVID-19, have been able to complete training, where necessary, with little delay.

Collaborative working with partner agencies and professionals has been key to keeping the current young person safe and her holistic needs met. Managers challenge other professionals where necessary. This ensures that the care the young person receives is in line with her needs. This gives the young person assurance that managers and staff advocate on her behalf.

Managers and staff place the well-being of the young person at the centre of their practice, irrespective of the challenges they may present.

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.

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to

the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2538287

Registered provider: Stoke-on-Trent City Council

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

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Christopher Whalley

Inspector

Ann-Marie Jones, Social Care Inspector

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