

2736466

Registered provider: Staffordshire County Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to 3 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

There is a registered manager in post who is suitably qualified and experienced.

At the time of the inspection, 3 children lived at the home. All 3 children were present, and 2 children chose to speak with the inspector.

Inspection date: 16 March 2026

Date of last inspection: 16 September 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

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

Since the last full inspection, one child has remained living at the home, one child has moved out and 2 children have moved in. Staff complete thorough assessments of each child's individual needs and plan moves carefully. Children who move into the home receive clear, personalised timetables that help them understand what to expect during their transition. This child-centred approach encourages children to share their views, express any worries and contribute to the planning process. As a result, children experience a smooth and well-managed move into the home.

The home offers a welcoming environment that is maintained to a good standard. Children are encouraged to share their views on the decoration of their bedrooms, enabling them to personalise their space in ways that reflect their individuality and promote a sense of belonging. Leaders take a proactive approach to reviewing how the home can be adapted to meet children's emerging needs. However, staff have not consistently verified the identity of all visitors on arrival. This shortfall affects the overall safety and security of children.

Education and learning are promoted effectively by staff and leaders. The manager has introduced clear systems to monitor and track each child's educational progress. This structured approach enables leaders to identify promptly when additional support is needed. As a result, children access appropriate education and receive the targeted help they need to make progress and achieve their potential.

Children are kept safe from harm. Staff follow comprehensive risk management plans that are reviewed regularly to reduce risks effectively. Staff work directly with children to help them understand risk and develop their resilience.

Leaders do not consistently notify the regulator of all serious incidents involving children or submit notifications within the required timescales. They have also delayed sending the home's quality of care review and the monthly independent visitor reports. These delays reduce the effectiveness of external oversight and limit the regulator's ability to ensure that safeguarding practice and children's experiences are meeting the required standards.

The manager has a strong understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development and has identified key aspects of practice to improve within the staff team. This targeted approach has informed a review of staff training and development. As a result, the training programme is increasingly aligned to the needs of children. This ensures that staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to provide effective care and support.

Improvements have been implemented in the quality and frequency of staff supervision. Staff now receive regular, good-quality supervision that provides space for them to reflect on their practice and on the needs of the children in their care. Team meetings enable staff to contribute to the effective running of the home and to stay well informed about children's plans and care needs. Staff have given positive feedback about these developments and report that the changes have had a positive impact on both children and the staff team.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/09/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/12/2024	Full	Good
03/01/2024	Full	Good

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, The 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 registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	4 May 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person must comply with relevant health and safety legislations. This specifically relates to ensuring that the relevant identification checks are completed on all visitors entering the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvements. This specifically relates to ensuring that senior leadership oversight of regulation 44 and 45 reports is completed in a timely manner and that these reports are sent to the regulator within the necessary timescales. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2736466

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Staffordshire County Council

Registered provider address: 1 Staffordshire Place, Stafford, Staffordshire ST16 2DH

Responsible individual: Joanne Spender

Registered manager: Natalie Harvey

Inspector

Charlotte Tippet, Social Care Inspector

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