

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	01/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC065059
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Stoke on Trent City Council
Registered person address	City of Stoke-on-Trent, Civic Centre, Glebe Street, STOKE-ON-TRENT, ST4 1HH

Responsible individual	Susan Hammersley
Registered manager	Helen Malanaphy
Inspector	Matt Hedges

Inspection date	01/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. Since the last inspection, several young people have moved into and out of the home. On rare occasions, young people leave the home quickly in challenging circumstances. Despite this, the registered manager and staff team ensure they receive effective, individualised support. Generally, young people move in an assessed and thoroughly planned way. Young people are consulted and engage well in the decision making process. This helps young people to feel secure and to settle quickly when they move. It also ensures that staff are equipped to meet their needs. As a result, young people develop strong relationships with staff and enjoy spending time together. They talk positively about the care they receive and are supported to make progress in important areas of their life. This includes significant improvements in some young people's behaviour. Parents also talk positively about the home and the staff team, one parent commenting, 'they are brilliant'. Several young people continue to achieve 100% attendance at school despite, a times, facing personal challenges. They are rightly proud of this. Other young people's attendance improves from their starting point because of the support they receive from staff. As a result, all young people achieve more academically. A social worker highlights this citing a, 'clear improvement in grades at school'. A small number of young people have been missing from the home since the last inspection. Significant concerns in relation to child sexual exploitation and drug use are well assessed by staff who have a good awareness of these issues. Staff respond well to the vast majority of incidents and continue to work very effectively with other agencies. Other professionals confirm this, one social worker comments, 'everyone was out looking for the young person when they went missing, the registered manager co-ordinated this really well...staff were creative...staff ensured communication was really good between all agencies including this police'. In contrast to this, on two occasions staff did not act on pertinent information in a timely way and failed to take effective action. The impact on the young person was minimised by other safeguards in place.	

The registered manager's monitoring and review processes failed to identify this shortfall in a timely way. This hindered her ability to make improvements in the quality of care provided on these occasions. In contrast, the registered manager has improved other elements of the home's quality assurance processes. A new independent person visits the home every month. Reports following these visits have significantly improved and are now of a good quality. However, there is often a delay before the registered manager receives the report. This prevents her from making best use of the information provided or addressing required actions quickly. The registered manager has also improved elements of her own monitoring. Day-to-day scrutiny has generally improved. In addition, actions identified through formal 'quality of care reviews' have started to identify weaknesses and drive improvement. Consequently, she has addressed the majority of the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. These improvements have the capacity to improve the quality of care provided to young people but are not yet fully embedded.

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to 2 children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is managed by a Local Authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/05/2015	CH - Full	Good
11/02/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/11/2014	CH - Full	Good
18/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good progress

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12. The Protection of Children Standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to missing from home, the registered provider must ensure that staff: - (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare.	25/03/2016
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard with particular reference to missing from home records, the registered person must: - (2) (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	25/03/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure that the registered person actively seeks independent scrutiny of the home and makes best use of information from independent monitoring (including under regulation 44). (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 55, paragraph 10.24)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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