

SC065059

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 and registered to provide care for up to two children with emotional and social difficulties because of early childhood trauma.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home. The children talked with the inspector.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2024.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 August 2025

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: 10 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/09/2024	Full	Good
08/11/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/11/2022	Full	Good
03/08/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

One child has lived in the home for over two years, and since the last inspection, another child has been admitted following an unplanned move. Managers, staff and the child's social worker collaborated effectively to gather all relevant information and carefully considered the needs and risks associated with the child, along with those of the child already living in the home. This thoughtful approach to care planning reduces anxiety for children and supports them to settle and make progress.

Children are supported to develop age-appropriate independence skills, including planning their daily routines, travelling independently, cooking and managing their self-care and their living space. Those preparing for the next stage of their lives receive focused support to build the skills they will need in adulthood. When children are reluctant to engage with their independence plans, staff respond with encouragement, education and creative strategies to promote participation. As a result, children grow in confidence and are better equipped for future transitions.

Children's progress in education is variable. One child attends school regularly and is working at age-related expectations, while the other has shown inconsistent engagement. The manager and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring children attend school or engage in education daily. When children experience difficulties, staff work closely with schools and social workers to explore alternative options and address barriers to attendance. Incentives are used to promote engagement, and when these are not effective, staff provide educational activities in the home and the community. This ensures that children continue to learn and develop essential skills for the future.

Staff are dedicated to promoting children's health and emotional well-being. Children are registered with appropriate health services, and staff and managers demonstrate a clear understanding of each child's physical and emotional needs. They ensure timely involvement of relevant professionals when required. Regular consultation with the clinical team enables staff to better understand children's lived experiences and tailor support accordingly. This contributes to improved emotional regulation and enhanced well-being through individualised care.

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

Children are kept safe because staff respond swiftly and appropriately when concerns arise regarding their safety or welfare. When a child goes missing, staff follow clear procedures and begin searching immediately. Risk assessments are well written, easy to understand and provide staff with precise guidance. This prompt and coordinated response helps to prevent children from being harmed or placed at further risk while missing from the home.

When a child makes an allegation, managers and staff share information promptly with all relevant professionals. The manager ensures that the child is seen by their social worker and that their safety and well-being are prioritised. As a result, children feel listened to and supported. However, the manager has delayed notifying Ofsted of some serious incidents. This has reduced external oversight and limited timely, independent scrutiny of safeguarding practice.

Staff know the children well and invest time in building trusting relationships. As a result, children feel safe and settled, and are more willing to share their worries and accept help. One child said they felt safe in the home and could identify adults they trusted and would speak to if they had concerns.

Staff support children to manage their feelings and behaviours in a calm and safe manner. Physical intervention is only used when necessary and as a last resort. Records are clear and demonstrate that children and staff are given time to reflect on incidents afterwards. This reflective practice helps children to make sense of events, reduces the likelihood of repeated behaviours and supports emotional recovery for both children and staff.

Inappropriate behaviours are managed through natural consequences, which help children to take responsibility and learn from their actions. When consequences are used, they are proportionate, fair and appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding. The manager reviews all incidents to ensure that responses are suitable and consistent. These approaches help children to experience clear boundaries, understand expectations and make safer choices over time.

Staff teach children about everyday risks and how to keep themselves and others safe. Children are given regular opportunities to reflect on their actions following incidents. Records show that even when a child is initially reluctant to engage, staff persist in offering alternative opportunities to ensure that learning still takes place. This helps children to understand risks and make better decisions.

Positive peer relationships are promoted in the home. Staff intervene quickly to prevent conflict and ensure that children do not hurt one another. This proactive approach has contributed to improved relationships and a calm, safe living environment.

The home is generally clean and safe. Children's bedrooms reflect their interests and are personalised. However, some decor is worn and the kitchen floor shows signs of wear and tear. The manager has initiated enquiries to replace the flooring. This planned improvement will enhance safety and contribute to a more homely and pleasant environment that supports children's well-being.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

An experienced manager leads the team, supported by a newly appointed deputy manager. Together, they share a clear and ambitious vision for the children and the staff

team. Their expectations are well communicated and understood, contributing to improvements in children's progress and the quality of care provided.

Staff speak positively about the support they receive from managers. Despite there being a staffing vacancy, leaders have worked hard to maintain consistency by deploying a stable team of bank and experienced staff from across the organisation. This continuity ensures that children are cared for by adults they know and trust, which has helped to reduce anxiety, strengthen relationships and improve staff morale.

Children are supported by a qualified and well-trained staff team. Managers ensure that all staff complete relevant training to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to meet children's individual needs and provide safe, effective care. Regular supervision, team meetings and monthly consultations with the home's clinical psychologist offer valuable opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice and deepen their understanding of children's experiences. This support has enabled staff to adopt a trauma-informed approach, which contributes to the progress children make.

Leaders and managers ensure that only suitable individuals work in the home. Safer recruitment processes are robust and consistently applied, helping to safeguard children.

Managers use a range of monitoring and review systems to evaluate practice and track children's progress. These systems are effective in identifying concerns early and ensuring timely action is taken. However, external monitoring is less effective. The independent visitor rarely seeks the views of children or external professionals, and their reports do not provide a clear evaluation of the impact of care on children's safety and well-being. This limits the effectiveness of external scrutiny and reduces opportunities to improve practice.

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

Statutory requirement

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 ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that the independent person regularly consults with children and external agencies on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided.	30 November 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure they notify Ofsted and other relevant persons without delay if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which they consider to be serious. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

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: SC065059

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stoke on Trent City Council

Registered provider address: Civic Centre, Floor 2, Glebe Street, Stoke on Trent ST4 1HH

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Lee Davies

Inspector

Nateisha Cardoza-Evans, Social Care Inspector

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