

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	12/05/2015
Unique reference number	SC065059
Type of inspection	Full
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	Phillip Morris

Inspection date	12/05/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved Effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC065059

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make good progress in all areas of their development. They are supported by a committed, skilled staff team who provide good and consistent care.
- Effective relationships exist with partner agencies. These relationships support the formulation of good plans.
- Relationships between the young people and staff are excellent. Young people feel they can trust staff, feel listened to and supported by the staff.
- Young people's relationships with family and friends are valued by staff.
- The Registered Manager is committed to supporting the staff team.
- Young people's emotional and behavioural needs are understood and services are in place meet these needs.
- Young people are treated with dignity and respect. Their individual diversity including race and culture are valued.
- The Registered Manager has not improved the monitoring of the quality of care provided.
- The Registered Manager has not ensured good consultation with a variety of stakeholders to improve the care the home provides.
- The Registered Manager has not ensured that reports provided by the independent visitor are of a good quality.
- The Registered Manager has not ensured robust systems are in place to continually improve the quality of services provided.

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
In order to meet the leadership and management standard with particular reference to having monitoring systems to monitor the quality of care the registered person must ensure reports regarding the quality of care promotes children's welfare (Regulation 13(1)(b))	01/08/2015
In order to meet the leadership and management standard with particular reference to utilising information to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided the registered person must ensure continuous improvement in the quality of care (Regulation 13(2)(h))	01/08/2015
The independent person must produce a report about a visit (the independent person report) which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether- children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's wellbeing (Regulation 44(4)(a)(b))	01/08/2015
To ensure if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and person working at the home as the independent person requires (Regulation 44(2)(a))	01/08/2015
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating. (Regulation 45(2))	01/08/2015

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home provides care and accommodation for two young people. The young people will be aged between 10-to-17 years of age. The home is a local authority children's home. The admission criteria to the home are young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home aims to offer young people a family environment that they can be proud to be part of. They seek to create a homely and comfortable environment that can meet young people's needs.

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

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Good and supportive relationships exist between staff and young people. Staff spend time with young people, listen to them and provide encouragement and guidance. The Registered Manager and the staff group persevere with young people and demonstrate determination to work through challenging times. The independence and self-care skills of young people continually improve. They are developing skills with budgeting, shopping and cooking. For example, a young person recently spent planned time living in a semi-independent accommodation to prepare him for transition into independence. This has developed young people's skills, abilities and confidence. The staff team value education. They recognise the crucial importance of educational achievement for young people. They all access education or college places and attendance at education is promoted by staff. Young people are supported with completing homework and encouraged by the staff team to do their best. One young person received a number of fixed term exclusions from school. She was not receiving the correct level of support from the school. The home advocated strongly on behalf of the young person, attempting to bring about re-entry into education in a timely manner and additional support. Meeting with limited success the Registered Manager used the correct routes to escalate this concern seeking a resolution. Young people receive good primary health care services that ensure their needs are prioritised. They have a range of services in place, annual health assessments, dental and opticians monitoring. Staff members ensure that any concerns are quickly acted upon. Smoking and the use of legal highs has been rigorously tackled by the manager and staff team. They have ensured that agencies best placed to support the young people are providing services. Staff members are well trained and experienced in recognising the signs of drug use. They have an excellent understanding of the impact upon young people. Individual sessions and health advice is provided to guide them towards making better and informed choices. The manager and staff are nurturing. They understand young people's emotional	

and mental health needs. Some young people experience emotional and behavioural distress resulting from past traumatic experience. It is to the young people's credit that they recognise and have insight into their own psychological needs.

One young person said the follow in relations to themselves and staff responses: 'I have to take responsibility for my behaviour, but they are always there if I need them'.

Young people receive therapeutic support from the local CAMHS service supported by the staff team. This means young people's therapeutic needs are of paramount importance.

Relationships between young people and their families are valued and supported. Young people continue to have contact with their families, friends and others who are important to them. Arrangements for contact are risk assessed, the home support these arrangements as part of the overall plan for young people.

Young people are treated with dignity, and respect. Care and placement planning is individualised taking into account their needs arising from race and culture. The staff promotes an understanding and valuing of difference. This means that young people's identity is positively valued and promoted.

The harmful effects of bullying are understood by the manager and staff. They work to develop good relationships between the young people. There are no reported incidents of bullying. This is closely monitored by the Registered Manager for any early indicators and to ensure the required prompt action is taken.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people are safe and protected by a staff team that knows them well. They have well established and trusting relationships. This has created an environment that helps them to feel safe, protected and nurtured. Safeguarding and meeting the needs of young people takes precedence. To achieve this, manager and staff members work well with health, local authority, education and other partners. For example, the manager is working closely with	

police to ensure there are good relationships with local police officers. The home has an established a core group of agencies they work well and closely with. There are good local connections between partner agencies that help to support and keep young people safe.

Robust multi-agency planning ensures young people are better protected by agencies that are coordinated and responsive to their needs. Looked after children's reviews, strategy and care planning meetings take place in a timely manner. These are forums to share knowledge of the young people and target resources to achieve maximum benefit for young people.

The Registered Manager and staff team understand the importance of working to a clearly defined plan. In order to achieve this placement plans are updated regularly, shared and understood across the staff team. This ensures good and consistent communication across the staff team for the benefit of young people.

Young people have people they can talk to if worried. Advocates, social workers and independent reviewing officers. The young people report that the adults do listen to them and act upon their wishes and feeling.

Incidents of missing from care have reduced in frequency. Any incidents of this nature are taken seriously by the manager and staff. The manager and staff follow the missing from care procedures promptly, notifying the police and social care. Upon young people returning to the home a missing from care return interview is carried by an independent person. Subsequently individual work is completed with the young person. The triggers leading to the behaviour are sought to be understood and measures put in place to prevent further recurrence.

The risk of sexual exploitation and the impact on young people is well understood and vigorously tackled by staff. Through a good understanding of young people, their whereabouts and friendship groups the staff quickly identify risk factors and take any action required. This ensures a pro-active and response approach keeps young people safe.

The use of physical intervention has taken place appropriately and has been recorded in accordance with policy and procedure.

Negative behaviour being displayed by young people is addressed quickly and effectively by the manager and staff group. Sanctions and consequences are used as a response to poor behaviour. These are balanced with rewards for positive behaviour. This is led to an environment with clear boundaries and expectations of behaviour but with care and nurture.

Allegations are dealt with appropriately. The manager and staff demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibilities if a young person makes any form of allegation. There are good and clear links with the Designated Officer (DO). The Registered Manager and staff understand clearly when they should contact the safeguarding to report any concerns.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
Young people benefit from a dedicated and suitable qualified Registered Manager. She has been in post since August 2010 and holds a level five Diploma in Leadership and Management. She is a committed and knowledgeable manager who demonstrates leadership with a determination to improve the quality of services. Strengths and weaknesses are well understood by the manager. The manager is supported by a temporary deputy manager. They are able to work cooperatively and have a good level of communication in all areas of the service. This means that young people receive consistently good service whilst residing in this home. The recruitment and vetting of new staff members has improved. Robust processes are now in place to minimise the possibility of young people being harmed by those in positions of trust. Young people are cared for by staff who know them well and with whom they have established relationships. Staff members are well supported. Good quality supervision and training opportunities. Together with an established staff appraisal system ensures the development of staff is a priority. Staff members are able to bring to bear their own strengths to the home, at the same time work safely and consistently. Young people benefit from this well-trained and supported staff group. Effective team meetings ensure good communication across the staff group takes place. These meetings provide a good opportunity for staff to share ideas and to secure consistent practice. Expert consultation and support is provided to members of staff. Psychologists from a partner agency provide support to the home in the form of consultation to staff members. This benefits young people as staff members have insight and	

understanding into the respective difficulties young people experience.

Young people's progress is evident from their starting points. The Registered Manager is able to provide evidence of the positive impact the home is making to the lives of young people. They are happy and settled and enjoy their lives and their self-esteem and confidence has increased. They continue to develop personal skills and are making informed decisions about their lives.

The staff work with a range of external agencies to promote the welfare of young people. These include social workers, health professionals, school and youth offending teams. The Registered Manager shares information to ensure that young people are safeguarded and that care needs are met.

The Registered Manager works with key partner agencies in completing the location assessment. An example, holding regular meets with local police to share information regarding the area and any difficulties. This is then used to consider the appropriateness of referrals and in updating risk assessments for young people. This ensures the progress young people are making is not hampered by accepting new young people the home who's needs they are not able to meet.

The home lacks a robust quality assurance process. The Registered Manager has not ensured that monthly monitoring reports completed by an independent visitor are to an acceptable standard. The reports lack information and analysis to enable the manager to be confident the home is receiving robust independent scrutiny.

The Registered Manager has not ensured the correct level of consultation with young people, social workers and other key stakeholders is secured. This hinders the manager in being able to evaluate and monitor closely the quality of care from the views of key stakeholders.

Effective monitoring reports by the Registered Manager have not been completed in a timely manner or to the standard required. The reports lack detail and analysis and are based upon already deficient systems for monitoring quality.

Poor quality assurance processes impedes the Registered Manager in working towards continued progress and potentially undermines progress for young people.

The Statement of Purpose is comprehensive and the children's guide is informative. These documents provide a good level of information to stakeholders and young people regarding the home.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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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