

SC065059

Registered provider: Stoke on Trent City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is managed by a local authority and supports young people aged between 10 and 17 years. The home offers care and accommodation for up to two young people. The manager has been registered with Ofsted since January 2018.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 July 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 20 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/06/2017	Full	Good
17/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/06/2016	Full	Good
01/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff ensure that every young person experiences unconditional, nurturing and genuine affection. Staff are highly skilled in building relationships with young people. This trust means that young people are confident to ask for help when they need it. One reviewing officer told the inspector, 'I believe staff have worked hard at developing positive working relationships with [young person's name] and her mother in an endeavour to maximise her involvement and enable progress in all facets of her life.'

Staff ensure that health plans are detailed and comprehensive. They promote good physical, mental and emotional health. Prompt access to in-house therapeutic support enables young people to begin to address past experiences and current concerns around their emotional health. Therapists also provide support and guidance to staff, enabling them to reflect on and understand young people's needs and behaviours. This collaborative approach helps young people to develop their own coping mechanisms to keep themselves safe.

Strong partnership working with schools means that young people make excellent progress in their education, particularly from their starting points. For example, some young people had been out of education for over 12 months prior to their admission. The manager and staff have enthusiastically advocated on behalf of young people. This has helped young people to have adapted timetables and changes made to their learning environments to help them re-engage in learning. One teacher told the inspector, 'The staff advocated for her to have a change of subject due to her being new to the school. Staff attend all parents' evening and relevant meetings and respond positively to any issues.'

Staff work closely with young people and their families to ensure that contact is well organised and safe. Some young people have made particularly good progress and have significantly better family contact than they had prior to living at the home. One parent told the inspector, 'Staff are really helpful with contact. I have no complaints.' This means that young people continue to build relationships and attachments with those significant to them.

One young person gave the inspector a full tour of the premises, showing the levels of cleanliness, state of repair, fixtures, fittings, décor, furnishings and equipment, which were all of a high standard.

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

Staff ensure that there are comprehensive risk assessments and risk management plans in place. These are regularly reviewed and include individually tailored strategies that help to keep young people safe. These records demonstrate that the staff have a clear understanding of the risks to young people and have implemented effective strategies to reduce and manage the risks that they face. One social worker told the inspector, 'Since her review in October, I observed a significant improvement in her behaviours.'

When young people go missing from the home, staff follow clear plans of action that everyone follows so that young people are quickly located and returned home safely.

Staff are highly skilled in de-escalation techniques, which are implemented extremely well. This is supported by the staff understanding each young person, their vulnerabilities and how these impact on their safety. When behaviour management strategies have been unsuccessful and there has been need for staff to use physical restraint, there is good management oversight of staff practice. This includes the contribution of the local authority's therapist team, which undertakes a wider piece of reflective work with the whole staff team. As a result, staff are good at identifying patterns and trends to inform future practice.

Staff make sure that the home is free from potential hazards to young people's safety. Environmental safety checks are routinely undertaken to promote the safety of young people in the home. Records show that young people and staff regularly practise evacuation of the building, so they know how to respond in an emergency.

The manager makes sure that young people are protected by the organisation's thorough recruitment practices. Staff are vetted and assessed as suitable before any appointment is confirmed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Young people benefit immensely from living in an exceptionally well-managed children's home. The experienced and child-focused manager has been in post since January 2018 and is qualified to the national vocational qualification level 4 in leadership, health and social care. The manager is committed and dedicated to improving outcomes for young people. He has an excellent understanding of their needs and oversees the quality of care.

Staff retention is excellent, and morale is high. Staff reported that they feel well supported. Reflective supervisions and purposeful team meetings support staff to understand how to support young people to make continual progress and to stay safe. Most staff hold qualifications appropriate to their roles and those that are not yet qualified are on course to meet the regulatory timescale.

Staff access a wide range of training. This includes mandatory training in safeguarding and behaviour management to more specialist training relating to young people's

individual needs. Because of this training, staff have the skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality care. The manager encourages continual staff progression and makes sure that he stays up to date with current legislation and seeks advice from external professionals relating to specific issues pertinent to individual young people. This helps to ensure that his knowledge is current. This includes identifying relevant research documents and sharing them with staff. Consequently, staff have the confidence and knowledge to provide the specialist care that young people need.

The manager and his staff have developed excellent relationships with a variety of partner agencies, including parents, social workers, and police and education services. The manager escalates concerns appropriately and is an enthusiastic advocate for the young people, holding partner agencies to account so that young people receive the very best care. The manager works collaboratively with other professionals to ensure that young people receive a strong, focused multi-agency response to meet their specific needs. One parent told the inspector, 'The staff are really good at representing and sticking up for [young person's name].' An education professional said, 'Communication is really good with the staff. There is always a prompt response to emails. Staff always attend meetings and I have a good line of communication with the manager.'

The manager has responded positively to the requirements made at the last full inspection. Risk assessments have been updated, staff are all now fully trained and the young person's guide has been reviewed and updated.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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 address: City of Stoke-on-Trent, Civic Centre, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 1HH

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Gareth Dawson

Inspector

Dave Carrigan, social care inspector

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