

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 provides care and accommodation for up to two young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a local authority.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 June 2017

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **Requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 17 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The manager ensures that staff provide young people with consistent and nurturing care in a safe and homely environment.
- The manager ensures that staff actively encourage young people to participate in a variety of activities that help to increase their social and recreational opportunities.

- The manager ensures that young people are provided with appropriate educational support so that they can reintegrate back into education or maintain their current educational placement.
- The manager ensures that young people's views and opinions are promoted to enable their participation in the running of the home.
- Staff actively facilitate family contact so that young people stay in touch with important people in their lives.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The manager has not ensured that staff training is up to date.
- The manager has not ensured that there is an up-to-date workforce plan in place to support the home's development.
- The manager has not ensured that risk assessments are consistent when addressing the changing needs of the young people.
- The manager has not ensured that the home's children's guide is a child-friendly document.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/06/2016	Full	Good
01/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/05/2015	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, 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) reference to risk assessments, the registered person must ensure that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))	15/07/2017
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promote their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child and to use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(h))	15/07/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that the children's home produces a children's guide. The children's guide must be made available to all children when their placement in the home is agreed (or on arrival at the home if the placement is made in an emergency) and must be age appropriate, provided in an accessible format and explained to each child to make sure they understand it. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people living in this home benefit from experienced staff who demonstrate commitment to meeting their needs and keeping them safe. As a result, most young people make good progress relative to their individual circumstances and their time living in the home. A professional told the inspector, 'I feel that the staff have worked very

hard to settle [young person] in and got to know her as quickly as they could. She is kept safe and appears happy to be there.'

The manager ensures that the health of young people is promoted positively. Young people have clear health plans and are registered with the relevant primary healthcare services. Staff have access to a psychologist who provides clinical oversight to them, which supports young people's emotional well-being. Medication is stored safely and a good medication management system helps to ensure that young people receive their medication safely.

Young people attend a variety of educational settings dependent on their needs and abilities. Staff are proactive in sourcing educational opportunities for young people struggling to engage in formal education. An education professional said, 'The manager attended an education review and following this meeting we made the decision to explore other provision to support [young person's] education. The home have supported with escorting [young person] on visits, provided transport to education settings and worked around a transition timetable.'

Young people said that views and opinions are listened to and they have opportunities through regular meetings and discussions with staff to make purposeful contributions. Because of this, young people feel valued and involved in all aspects of their care.

Young people are encouraged to maintain contact with their families and carers in accordance with their care plans. The staff assist with transport and, when required, the supervision of contact. These arrangements reflect any restrictions that may be in place to safeguard young people and these are clearly understood and followed by staff.

The manager ensures that young people are supported to develop independence and life skills that are appropriate to their age and understanding. This includes development of self-care skills, such as independent travel on public transport, shopping and preparation of meals.

Young people grow in confidence because they are encouraged to take part in fun activities, including days out to places of interest and weekends away. This helps them to make new friendships within the community and gives them a chance to try different experiences and develop new skills.

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

Young people confirm that they feel safe living in the home. One young person said, 'I feel safe living here; I know that if anyone wanted to harm us, the carers would deal with them.' Staff receive comprehensive training around safeguarding and are clear about the procedures to follow should they need to use them.

Staff do not ensure that risk assessments are thorough and consider known risks or highlight the existing risk management strategies that are in place. This means that staff are referring to risk assessments that do not contain all the relevant information to keep

young people safe.

The manager ensures that staff use well thought-out behaviour management strategies and use their positive relationships with the young people to defuse and manage challenging behaviour. Because of this approach, there have been no physical restraints since the last inspection.

Young people who go missing from home are protected by good reporting procedures that are shared between the appropriate agencies. This ensures that collaborative working practice safeguards young people. Young people are able to access an independent person to speak to on their return home. This helps to protect young people from deciding to go missing again from home.

The manager ensures that safe recruitment procedures are followed. These procedures promote the safety of the young people by preventing unsuitable adults from working with them.

The manager has ensured that all staff working at the home have received up-to-date fire safety training to enable them to minimise the risks to young people in the event of a fire at the home. This is supported by regular health and safety checks to help ensure that young people's physical safety in the home is well protected.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

There is a new manager in charge of the home. He took up post in March 2017 and is currently in the process of registering with Ofsted. The manager holds a level 4 national vocational qualification in leadership, health and social care, and has responsibility for another home in the area.

Staff report that they are well supported and receive regular supervision. This enables them to discuss any training and development needs as well as the care of young people. Most staff are qualified. Those who are unqualified are in the regulatory period to obtain their qualification.

The manager has ensured that staff have access to a range of training opportunities. However, records do not demonstrate that all staff have undertaken sufficient training to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of young people currently in placement. For example, the training matrix does not show that all staff have completed training around child sexual exploitation. This means that staff are not fully equipped to recognise and care for young people presenting these concerns.

The manager has ensured that the home has an informative statement of purpose that provides clear information about the services that young people can expect to receive. The children's guide requires reviewing to make it a more child-friendly document. The current document contains some contradictory information within it, along with set routines that offer no flexibility to young people.

The independent visitor provides an oversight of the running of the home, making clear reference to areas of practice that need to improve for the benefit and safety of young people.

The manager has not ensured that the home's development plan is up to date. This means that the growth and development of the home are not being addressed. This may hinder future improvements.

The manager has formed positive relationships with a range of agencies, including education departments, social workers and the police. One professional said, 'I am in regular contact with the home; I get phone calls and emails informing me of how [young person] is doing.' This collaborative approach supports the promotion of young people's safety and welfare.

The manager has taken action to address the requirements and recommendations from the last inspection. The manager's review of care now includes the opinions of others and placement plans have been updated to include all assessed risks.

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 difference 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 ST4 1HH

Responsible individual: Susan Hammersley

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Dave Carrigan, social care inspector

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