

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	02/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC065679
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Staffordshire County Council
Registered person address	Staffordshire County Council, Wedgwood Buildings, Tipping Street, STAFFORD, ST16 2DH

Responsible individual	Richard Hancock
Registered manager	Mark Guest
Inspector	Louise Whittle

Inspection date	02/02/2016
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 improved effectiveness. Since the last inspection, there has been significant improvement in the care of unaccompanied young people, who do not speak English when they arrive. There has been an increase in the availability of a range of language interpreters. This enables the home to facilitate weekly group meetings and valuable one to one work with young people. Interpreters are also able to visit to meet the specific communication needs of young people at other times. Caring staff listen to young people and respond positively to their requests and concerns. Young people, say that they are happy and get on well with the staff. They continue to enjoy a welcoming home where they can personalise their rooms and display their artwork. Young people engage in a range of fun activities with staff, including sports, art and music, both playing and listening. Staff support them to practise their religion, have access to culturally appropriate food and experience celebrations such as the Chinese New Year. Young people have made progress in a range of areas of their development. Staff have skillfully supported one young person to greatly improve his relationship with his parents, resulting in him being able to return home. Another has benefitted from the vigilance of staff, who identified a number of previously unrecognised health issues. These include possible epilepsy and the underlying emotional causes of his volatile behaviour. A proactive decision to place two unaccompanied young people of the same ethnic origin together has resulted in them forming a positive and supportive relationship and moving on to the same foster placement. Highly skilled staff keep young people safe, despite them often exhibiting challenging behaviours. One young person with a history of drug misuse, no longer uses drugs due to effective work by staff in conjunction with drug and mental health services. Another young person no longer abuses alcohol and is now engaging in education. Over a period of three months, staff effectively managed the dynamics of a small group of the young people, which had led to a number of incidents of damage to	

the home. Staff worked with the police and other professionals to contain the situation until local authorities made the decision to move two of the young people. This effectively reduced friction and addressed potential safeguarding issues. Staff supported the young people and helped them to move.

The social worker for one young person says that the risk assessments produced by the staff are excellent and that staff keep the young people exceptionally safe.

The registered manager has effectively challenged the local authority to provide interpreting services for young people, in response to the requirements from the last inspection. Staff speak very positively of the registered manager and of the support they receive from him. They have recently benefitted from additional training to address child sexual exploitation, unaccompanied minors and radicalisation.

The registered manager strongly encourages staff to work closely with a wide range of professionals. Work with the virtual school has resulted in increased access for young people to both formal and informal education. This has included the Princes Trust, and weekly English lessons via the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service. Staff also work effectively with the police and health professionals and regularly attend a local authority multi-agency child sexual exploitation panel.

The registered manager's review of the quality of service provision has resulted in a number of improvements to the service. The home now reliably receives the independent interview reports undertaken when young people return after being missing. These provide valuable information for their safeguarding work with young people. The team has explored Working Together 2015 in meetings to highlight the importance of interagency work in keeping children safe. The registered manager has reviewed risk assessments to enhance the ability of staff to reflect on the likely outcome of incidents if they had not taken appropriate actions. This enables them to identify the actions that have been most effective in avoiding the use of restraints. This additional training supports staff to understand the impact of their work on young people in order to meet their needs more effectively and drive up standards.

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority owned children's home. It is registered to care for up to five children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, aged between 12 and 17 years on a short- term basis. Young people normally stay no longer than 12 weeks, during which time staff support assessments and enable them to return home or move on to appropriate long term placements.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/08/2015	CH - Full	Good
11/03/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/11/2014	CH - Full	Good

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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