

SC065679

Registered provider: Staffordshire County Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a local authority. It is registered to provide care for one child who may have experienced childhood instability which has resulted in trauma and associated behaviours.

The home has been without a registered manager since December 2021.

Inspection date: 22 June 2022

This monitoring visit

This children's home was judged inadequate at the full inspection on 4 and 5 May 2022, due to significant shortfalls in safeguarding practice and poor leadership.

The focus of this visit was to monitor and review the actions taken by the local authority to address the shortfalls raised at the last inspection. At the time of the visit, one child was living at the home.

The home does not currently have a permanent manager. As an interim arrangement, the deputy manager is managing the home with support from senior managers. Recruitment is ongoing for a suitably experienced and qualified manager.

Staffing shortages mean that agency staff continue to be used in the home on a regular basis. However, the acting manager has used a consistent group of agency staff, so that the child is not cared for by too many unfamiliar adults.

Incidents of one child going missing from the home have increased. Overall, staff respond well to the incidents and have ensured that the child's missing-from-care protocol has been followed. Following such incidents, the manager works alongside other agencies such as the police, youth offending team and social worker to

safeguard the child. At the time of the inspection, the child was missing from the home, however, agencies have continued to work jointly to locate the child.

Risk assessments and behavioural support plans now contain the relevant detail and are updated on a regular basis. The plans provide clear guidance for the staff with regard to managing the child's risk and behaviours. The child has been involved in creating their own risk assessment as a way of trying to reduce his risks. This encourages him to make safe choices.

The effectiveness of the risk assessments is undermined because staff do not always follow the agreed strategies. For example, on one occasion when the child was found after being missing from the home, staff agreed for the child to be brought back to the home by a person they did not know. This had the potential to expose the child to harm.

Senior managers and the acting manager have reviewed and reflected on the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. In response to this, they have devised an action plan to improve the quality of care provided by staff. The action plan is in its infancy and new management monitoring systems are not yet embedded.

The child's care plans do not contain up-to-date information relating to the child's individual needs. This means that staff are not provided with sufficient guidance to support and help children.

Two of the three requirements raised at the last inspection were not reviewed and have been restated.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/05/2022	Full	Inadequate
24/08/2021	Full	Good
22/01/2020	Full	Good
01/08/2018	Full	Outstanding

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) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(vi)) This specifically relates to the staff following the child's risk assessments.	15 August 2022
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 promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person 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)(h)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that they have monitoring and reviewing systems in place to identify shortfalls effectively.	15 August 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and	15 August 2022

have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(iii)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that children are suitably matched to the home.	
The registered person must ensure that— within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(c)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that debriefs are carried out with children and that these are recorded.	15 August 2022
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(b)) The specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that children's records are kept up to date.	15 August 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should put systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC065679

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Staffordshire County Council

Registered provider address: Wedgwood Buildings, Tipping Street, Staffordshire ST16 2DH

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Kelay

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Lydia Isaac, Social Care Inspector

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