

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	04/06/2015
Unique reference number	SC369825
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	Christopher Whalley
Inspector	Matt Hedges

Inspection date	04/06/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Declined effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	Two compliance notices were issued on 06 March 2015. A monitoring visit took place on 19 March 2015 and both compliance notices had been complied with.
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC369825

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Young people do not receive effectively planned care. This stems from poor impact assessments, completed before young people move to the home, where key information is missing.
- Risk assessments are generic and lack detail. This includes missing from care
- Young people do not receive consistent care. This is because a number of permanent staff are currently away from work. As a result, staff from other homes are being used to cover shifts.
- Not all staff have appropriate training in key areas.
- Pre-employment checks are not effectively recorded for some staff. Reports by the home's independent visitor are poor. They do not set out the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. This does not support effective monitoring.
- The Registered Manager has not reviewed/revised the home's Statement of Purpose appropriately.

The children's home strengths

- Some young people's attendance at school/college has improved significantly. This is now 100%.
- Young people's views influence the running of the home. For example, they are actively involved in the recruitment of new staff.
- Staff celebrate young people's achievements, this increases self-confidence.
- The home works closely with a wide range of other agencies.
- Feedback from other professionals is generally very positive.
- The quality of the Registered Manager's monitoring reports has improved.

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
12 The protection Standard In order to meet the protection of children quality standard the registered person must ensure that staff in particular: - (i) 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.	03/07/15
13 The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must: (c) ensure that staff have the skills to meet the needs of each child. (e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. This relates specifically to the visits by the home's independent person.	03/07/15
14 The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure that children: (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. This specifically relates to the young people's impact assessments. The standard also requires the registered person to ensure: (a) 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	03/07/15

the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose;	
The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 16 (3) (a))	03/07/15
If a home has a website, the registered person must ensure that a copy of the statement of purpose is published on that website unless the registered person considers that such publication would prejudice the welfare of children in the home. (Regulation 16 (4))	03/07/15
The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (3) (d))	03/07/15
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, and relatives as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2) (a))	03/07/15
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's 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 well-being. (Regulation 44 (4))	03/07/15

Full report

Information about this children's home

- The home may only provide care and accommodation for up to 2 children.
- The home may provide care and accommodation for children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.
- The home is managed by a Local Authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/02/2015	CH - Interim	Declined in effectiveness
24/07/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
25/03/2014	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	requires improvement
Several young people have recently moved into the home. Impact assessments, completed before they moved in, are poor and key information is missing. Consequently, young people do not receive effectively planned care from the start of their time in the home. In addition, the impact of young people living together is not fully considered. This has led to a number of incidents, most notably involving the use of drugs. This impacts negatively on young people's health and their emotional well-being. A number of professionals also expressed some concerns about the impact young people can have on each other. A small number of young people have left the home recently. This was due to the risks that unsafe adults posed in the local community. Managers and staff worked with other agencies and taken the necessary action to try and address these risks. Ultimately, they were not able to reduce them sufficiently. A young person's social worker explained the need to move a young person quickly. Despite this, staff provided good support to the young person during this time. Relationships between core staff and young people are strong. Staff highlight young people's achievements and are proud of the progress they make. Young people talk positively about this. One young person remarks, 'staff are nice, they respect you and do nice things for you.' Recently however, a high number of staff have been absent from work. Their shifts are being covered by staff from other homes. These staff do not know young people as well. Furthermore, many of these staff are not sufficiently skilled in key areas such as substance misuse, or sexually harmful behaviour. As a result, young people are not currently receiving consistent care or support and staff are unable to reduce risks in these areas effectively. Young people's education attendance has been mixed, a small number of young people have struggled to engage in school. For most young people, their education attendance is excellent. This is a highly significant achievement. For example, one young person had not been in education for several years. Within three months of moving to the home they had achieved 100% attendance. Another young person has been able to maintain 100% attendance despite some significant personal challenges. Young people are rightly proud of this. One young person explained they had received an award for their work and are hoping to be in the local newspaper. Going to school had been difficult, 'now it's easy...like a warm knife through butter'. Young people's views are understood and are taken into account by staff and	

managers. This is evident in a number of day-to-day activities in the home. In addition, young people are a key part of the home's recruitment process and form their own panel. One young person explained the importance of this and had developed a number of excellent questions to ask candidates. Young people take this seriously and are proud of this, particularly the need to wear a nice suit while interviewing! This develops young people's confidence. It also provides an opportunity to socialise with other members of the panel after the interviews.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
Risk assessments are poor. They are generic and do not adequately assess whether young people are at risk of harm. They do not take account of all relevant information. Furthermore, they do not provide staff with sufficient guidance on the actions they should take. As a result, staff are unable to make suitable arrangements to reduce risk in key areas, including the use of drugs and other challenging behaviours. This is particularly problematic when staff do not know young people well. Young people express mixed views about their safety. A young person comments 'I do sometimes feel safe - it's my home...but sometimes I don't because of things that happen'. Some young people continue to go missing or are regularly absent from the home. For a small number, this has been highly significant and has led to the need to move away from the area. For others this is reducing. Practice in relation to missing episodes is mixed. Missing from home risk assessments lack detail. They do not show staff how to reduce the risk of individual young people going missing or the specific risk factors they should consider. This limits the effectiveness of the preventative work undertaken with some young people. Despite this, staff take appropriate action after young people go missing. Staff search for young people and on some occasions are able to convince them to return home. Links with specialist police officers are also good. Police officers explain that, 'lessons have been learned in terms of sharing information...this is much improved... The Registered Manager understands the importance of the early sharing of intelligence.' Staff recruitment processes are not robust for all staff. One staff file does not contain evidence of all of the required pre-employment checks. Specifically, the Registered Manager had failed to verify the reasons why some previous employment, involving work with children or vulnerable adults, ended. He is aware of this shortfall and is taking steps to address this. Other checks are in place, which has limited the impact on young people's safety.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
A suitably experienced and qualified Registered Manager manages the home. He has recently registered with Ofsted but remains on a temporary contract. This creates a sense of uncertainty for staff and the management team. This in turn has the potential to create anxiety for the young people. Additionally, due to staffing shortages, many staff are also currently working at the home on a temporary, short-term basis. As a result, staff do not have access to training tailored to the specific needs of the young people. This reduces staff confidence and subsequently affects the consistency and quality of support offered to young people. The quality of the processes for monitoring the home is mixed. The home is visited every month by an independent visitor. These reports are of poor quality. Key safeguarding concerns are not commented on satisfactorily. The reports do not effectively assess whether young people are effectively safeguarded or whether the conduct of the home promotes their well-being. In addition, reports do not include sufficient detail of young people's views or the views of their families. This prevents the Registered Manager using monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. In addition, it limits the ability of Ofsted to maintain a robust overview of the home between inspections. Critically, it also does not protect young people by effectively assessing their safety. In contrast, the Registered Manager's monitoring reports have improved in quality. This recent improvement has started to identify some of the home's shortfalls. These then inform monthly improvement plans. This has helped the Registered Manager to become more aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses. However, these improvements are yet to be fully embedded. The Registered Manager has not revised the home's Statement of Purpose regularly. Specifically, a young person was admitted to the home with needs that fell outside of those detailed in the Statement of Purpose. The Registered Manager did not revise the document for several weeks. The impact on young people was further exacerbated by the poor quality impact assessments referred to previously and the lack of permanent, suitably trained staff available. In addition, the Statement of Purpose published on the provider's website is out of date. This impacts on the accuracy of the information available to young people, families and other professionals. The Registered Manager has strong links with families and professionals from a wide range of agencies including, the police, youth offending teams, education, social workers, mental health professionals and specialist drugs workers. The majority of feedback from other professionals is excellent and highlights effective joint working. For example, a youth offending worker states, 'the team have been	

great. They keep me up to date and have been really supportive'. An education worker states, 'I can't fault the home at all, their support has helped the young person to change for the better'. This helps young people to receive the support that they need.

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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