

# SC369825

Registered provider: Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by the local authority and offers care for two children who have experienced childhood instability leading to trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since November 2019.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

### Inspection dates: 5 to 6 October 2021

|                                                                                           |             |
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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>good</b> |
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|                                                             |                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | requires improvement to be good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

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

**Date of last inspection:** 26 June 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 26/06/2019      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 03/07/2018      | Full            | Good                            |
| 27/02/2018      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness         |
| 23/05/2017      | Full            | Good                            |

## **Inspection judgements**

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Two children live in this home. Staff support children well to help them make progress. Staff recognise when progress is slow and make good effort to ensure that children receive appropriate support. One child has moved on to live with a new family. This was a planned and successful move.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have worked hard and liaised with the children's educators and social work teams to reduce the impact of school absence on children's learning. Staff promote and support one child's engagement in working towards apprenticeships and employment well. As a result, children start to make a positive contribution to their learning.

Children are encouraged and supported to lead a healthy lifestyle. Staff work with health professionals to ensure that children know how to access support and advice in relation to their physical and emotional health. They support children to attend routine medical appointments and specialist care. Where children are resistant to attending health appointments, staff take time to explain the importance of these. As a result, children's health needs are continually promoted.

The registered manager and staff have a good understanding about the importance of family relationships and promote these well. Consequently, this has helped to ensure that important emotional connections children have with their family are maintained.

Staff access support from the in-house therapeutic service. This service provides guidance and helps staff to develop strategies that keep the children safe. It also enables them to have a better understanding of children's vulnerabilities. This is valuable for staff in supporting children's emotional well-being.

Children live in a welcoming home environment. The home has been furnished and decorated to meet the needs of the children. Staff support children to personalise and maintain the upkeep of their bedrooms. Children take pride in their personal space. However, some aspects of the home need further work. For example, the home's exterior requires repairs, such as the drain covers, hanging cables and extractor vent.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

Children feel safe and settled in the home. One child told the inspector that he would not change any aspect of the home or the care he receives. As a result, the child is developing positive relationships with most of the staff.

Staff work effectively with other professionals to respond quickly to safeguarding concerns. They have good relationships with the police, social workers, education professionals and therapists. As a result, children have clear care plans and strategies that reduce any potential risk to them.

Incidents of restraint are rare. This is because most staff have positive relationships with children. Staff are experienced in using distraction techniques and using approaches to ensure that situations do not escalate quickly. Children benefit from this approach, which contributes to their positive experiences.

The registered manager has ensured that comprehensive risk assessments are in place for each child. However, despite having detailed plans, staff have failed to follow these risk assessments. For example, when one child went missing from the home on several occasions, staff did not always follow the missing-from-care protocol and carry out searches for the child. As a result, the child was sometimes missing from the home overnight and travelled long distances across the country, which increased the risks of harm to them.

Staff have important conversations with children about a range of topics, including physical education, substance misuse and internet safety. However, on one occasion, staff did not talk to one child about their behaviour towards another child. Consequently, this is a missed opportunity to help the child to understand the impact of their behaviour on others and develop positive relationships.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager is committed and motivated in improving standards within the home. He shows genuine care and warmth for the children and staff he supports.

There is good enduring partnership working with professionals and the registered manager. This includes social workers, teachers and the advocacy service. This means that children benefit from this tailored support, which has a positive impact on what progress they make.

The registered manager escalates matters on behalf of children when he identifies shortfalls. For example, when one child's arrangements to see their family did not take place, the registered manager ensured that the child received support from an independent visitor. This means that the child will be supported in the planning and decisions about future family arrangements.

Not all staff who work in the home have the necessary qualifications to meet children's needs. Two out of six staff members have not completed their required level 3 qualification within the specified timescale. Consequently, children do not always have staff on duty who are suitably qualified.

During the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, staff did not receive face-to-face training. The registered manager did not address this weakness to ensure that staff used available technology well to continue to receive the refresher training they required. This means that not all staff have been given the opportunity to refresh their skills and knowledge.

Overall, staff feel supported by the registered manager and deputy manager. Staff confirm that team meetings are regular and enable them to discuss the quality of care that they provide to children. However, the registered manager does not always ensure that regular and practice-related supervision is in line with the home's statement of purpose. As a result, not all staff receive consistent opportunities to reflect on their learning and development from their practice.

## 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         |
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| <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; and</p> <p>help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful.</p> <p>(Regulation 11(1)(a) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that children are supported in developing positive relationships.</p> | 19 November 2021 |
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 19 November 2021 |

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| <p>necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; and</p> <p>(v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person.</p> <p>(Regulation 12(1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v))</p> <p>This particularly refers to staff ensuring that they follow guidance in children's risk assessments.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                         |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; and</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13(1)(b) (2)(c)(d)(h))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that staff provide consistent care to the child and use internal monitoring systems more effectively.</p> <p>Also, that the registered manager ensures that staff are able to receive all their refresher training.</p> | <p>19 November 2021</p> |
| <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>17 December 2021</p> |

if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home,

if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).

The requirements are that—

the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;

For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—

the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 3 Diploma”); or

a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.

The relevant date is—

in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or

in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.

(Regulation 32(1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))

This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that all staff have completed the relevant qualification in residential childcare.

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all aspects of the home are welcoming. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff supervision records provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b).



(‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraphs 13.3 and 13.4)

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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:** SC369825

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** City of Stoke-On-Trent

**Registered provider address:** Swann House, Boothern Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 4SY

**Responsible individual:** Tracey Docksey

**Registered manager:** Darren Edwards

## Inspector

Patrick McIntosh, Social Care Inspector

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