

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 home is run by a local authority. It is registered to care for up to two children with social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2023.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 January 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 December 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/12/2023	Full	Good
17/05/2022	Full	Good
05/10/2021	Full	Good
26/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home has experienced a number of changes since the last inspection, with two children moving in and two children moving out. At the time of inspection, two children were living at the home.

Children's experiences are positive, and they are making good progress. Children say they like the adults who care for them and that they feel listened to and well supported. One child said about the manager, 'He listens, and he gets things done.'

Children experience consistent care from dedicated staff. Staff speak about children with warmth and affection. They remain sensitive to children's identities, developmental needs and family history. This supports the development of shared, trusting relationships.

Staff prioritise children's education. One child experienced delays in accessing education after arriving at the home, and the manager escalated this matter with relevant external professionals. Both children now have access to suitable education that meets their needs. Staff and the manager communicate well with education professionals, and this aids children's engagement and learning. Children understand the expectations staff have of them for education and have excellent attendance. As a result of staff support and advocacy, both children have made progress in education.

Staff support children to build and maintain relationships with people who are important to them. A child's parent said how well the staff had supported them, resulting in family time increasing and reunification plans for the child progressing.

Staff provide children with exceptional support to prepare them for independence. Plans for independence begin as children move into the home. They are individual, flexible and purposeful and consider the children's strengths and vulnerabilities. For a child nearing adulthood, staff are exploring ways of strengthening lifelong links to support them to maintain relationships with adults who want the best for them.

Children have access to hobbies and activities. Staff have introduced fishing as a hobby, and both children have responded well to this. There are photos displayed throughout the home of the children and staff fishing. Children have competed in fishing competitions, and one child has won a medal, demonstrating the enjoyment and achievement they gain from this new hobby.

Children benefit from a therapeutic approach from staff. This is an area of strength. The approach is clear in the children's plans and risk assessments, and this helps to embed the approach in the care provided for children. Staff work creatively to capture children's views, wishes and feelings well. Children know how to raise concerns, and they engage

well with one-to-one sessions. As a result, children feel valued, and they grow in confidence.

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

The manager and staff respond well to children who go missing from the home. They review plans in line with the children's circumstances, age and stage of development. Staff involve children in meetings, discussions and plans, and this helps them understand risk and develop strategies to keep themselves safe. Staff also work hard to support children to take age-appropriate risks. As a result, missing-from-home incidents have reduced.

Children and staff benefit from the support of a clinical team that engages children in meaningful discussions about understanding and managing risks. When appropriate, additional staff training with the clinical team is arranged. The manager and staff ensure good practice is shared. As a result, children moving on from the home have access to a support network that understands their risks and vulnerabilities.

Children benefit from staff undertaking good-quality direct work with them. This helps them manage their feelings and behaviours. Children can reflect and share with staff what the staff can do to help them. Open discussions support children to reflect on real-life scenarios and decisions that may place themselves and others at risk. This helps children to build their resilience and become active decision-makers in the future.

Children's health needs are well supported. Staff are trained in first aid and have protocols in place to support each child's individual health needs. Staff work closely with health professionals to ensure children have access to the services they need. This includes specialist substance misuse support services. When children are unwilling to access this support, staff seek consultation from specialist professionals to offer one-to-one support in-house.

Since the last inspection, concerns have been raised regarding the local authority's recruitment systems. Senior leaders worked swiftly to address these and have disseminated learning to managers. This has led to improvements in their systems to ensure staff are recruited safely.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably qualified and is supported by a dedicated staff team. Staff speak highly of the manager. Supervision sessions are regular and of good quality, and staff receive regular training that is relevant to the children's individual needs. This supports staff development and leads to child-focused practice that is safe and consistent.

Both the responsible individual and the manager have a shared vision, with children at the heart of practice. Both are open to challenge and learning. This supports a reflective staff team that has high expectations for children. There are currently plans to

strengthen overnight staffing arrangements after managers identified this as an area for improvement.

Professionals are positive in their feedback. They say multi-agency working is effective and that staff are strong advocates for the children. Professionals also recognise the positive support children receive when moving on from the home. The registered manager ensures that team meetings are informative and child focused. They include a good level of discussion about children's needs, and this discussion is enhanced by the inclusion of the clinical team. This helps staff think about children's needs from different perspectives.

The manager has a range of systems to oversee the children's quality of care. These have improved since the previous inspection. Oversight of staff practice is clear, and when needed, this leads to challenge, discussion and shared learning. The manager uses reports from the independent visitor and peer audits to review and improve practice. However, the visitor's reports have not always been shared with the regulator in a timely manner.

Most of the staff are qualified and have a good level of experience. This means they have a good level of knowledge in relation to their roles. This helps to ensure that they provide good-quality care to children.

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, The 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 registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1) (7)(a))	31 March 2025

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 address: Civic Centre Glebe Street, Floor 2, Stoke on Trent ST4 1HH

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Daniel Barker

Inspectors

Mandy Wake, Social Care Inspector
Nateisha Cardoza-Evans, Social Care Inspector

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