

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC369825
Inspector	Matthew Hedges
Type of inspection	Interim
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	POST VACANT
Date of last inspection	24/07/2014

Inspection date	24/02/2015
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Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged adequate at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **declined in effectiveness**.

The safety of young people and staff is compromised by the absence of robust safeguarding measures for the security of the premises. Concerns have been raised that an unauthorised adult has entered the home at night. Some changes have been made. These have not been effective to reduce the risk to avoid the same thing happening again. This places young people and staff still at continued risk of harm as a result of poor security and management oversight.

A young person has recently left the home. This move was at their request and was done quickly. One of the reasons given was that they did not feel safe in the home. As a consequence, this has limited the planning of their transition and the support that staff can offer.

Since the last inspection, young people's progress has been mixed. Some young people continue to attend school. For others, school attendance is minimal. This impacts on their academic progress. The routine of the home is not organised to support young people's school attendance. For example, young people do not always have appropriate school clothing ready on time. This further hinders young people's progress.

Staff express frustration regarding some young people who go missing and feel, 'powerless' in this regard. When young people go missing staff take appropriate action and make suitably records. Some young people continue to go missing from the home. This places them at risk. This includes becoming involved in criminal activity. A lone working risk assessment has been completed in relation to missing from home. This assessment contains inaccurate information and insufficient guidance for staff who are working alone. Specifically the home's policy indicates that if a young person is missing, staff will look for them. The risk assessment does not address how staff will do this when they are working alone.

The home work closely with a range of other agencies including, social care, education, and the police. This ensures that information is shared effectively. The views of other professionals are generally positive regarding the home and the support they offer to young people. In contrast, a small number of professionals raised concerns regarding the appropriateness of the location and security of the home in relation to specific young people.

The home's response to previous shortfalls has been mixed. Five requirements and one recommendation were made at the last inspection. The recommendation and three requirements were met. Two requirements have been reissued. A further six requirements and two recommendations have been made at this inspection.

Some improvements have been made to the monitoring processes used by the manager. Regular monitoring reports are now completed and sent to Ofsted. The home's Statement of Purpose has also been updated and staff now receive regular supervision. Despite this, the oversight of some key issues has been poor. This has resulted in a number of shortfalls not being addressed. Complaints are not always recorded. As a result, it is impossible to see whether they have been appropriately handled. Notifications of serious incidents are not sent to Ofsted in a timely way. This limits the oversight that Ofsted has between inspections. In addition, parents are not always informed of significant incidents in their child's lives. Parents have expressed concern regarding this.

Managers were unable to evidence whether suitable pre-employment checks have been completed for all staff working in the home. This is with specific regard to gaps in employment and verification of the reasons for leaving previous positions whose duties involved work with children or vulnerable adults. This process does not protect young people from unsafe adults working at the home.

Some fire safety issues are not suitably or sufficiently risk assessed. Primarily this relates to young people smoking in their bedrooms. This increases the risk of fire and puts people at risk. As a result, Ofsted have referred these concerns to the fire and rescue service.

Two new recommendations have been made at this inspection. The home does not evaluate the effectiveness of the learning and development programme annually. In addition, the home does not keep a written or electronic record detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff. These shortfalls hinder effective oversight of these areas.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/07/2014	Full	adequate
25/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
04/04/2013	Full	good
11/12/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there (Regulation 11 (1) (a)) *	13/03/2015
18 (2001)	ensure that the routine of the home is organised so as to further children's participation in education, including regular attendance at school and participation in school activities of children of compulsory school age, regular attendance at college where applicable (Regulation 18 (1)(b))	27/03/2015
23 (2001)	ensure that any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably practicable free from avoidable risks with regards to individualised lone working risk assessments (Regulation 23 (b))	27/03/2015
24	ensure that a written record is made of any	27/03/2015

(2001)	complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation (Regulation 24 (5))	
26 (2001)	ensure that no person is employed at the children's home unless that person is fit to work at a children's home (Regulation 26 (1) (a))	27/03/2015
30 (2001)	ensure that if, in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Regulation 30 (1))	27/03/2015
30 (2001)	ensure that without delay the parent of any child accommodated in the home is notified of any significant incident affecting the child's welfare unless to do so is not reasonably practicable or would place the child's welfare at risk (Regulation 30 (2))	27/03/2015
32 (2001)	ensure that the requirements of Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and any regulations made under are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 32 (1A) (b))	27/03/2015
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are secure from unauthorised access (Regulation 31 (2) (b)) *	13/03/2015

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and if necessary is updated (NMS 18.2)
- ensure that a written or electronic record is kept by the home detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, including the registered person. The record is signed by the supervisor and the member of staff at the end of the supervision. (NMS 19.5)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections 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

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.