

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	29/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC369825
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
Inspector	Pete Hylton

Inspection date	29/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
This home was judged Requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness.	
This home was last inspected in June 2015 and was judged to require improvement. There have been some recent changes to the management of the home. A new manager has applied for registration with Ofsted and a registration decision will shortly be made. The home's management team have ensured that all requirements from the previous inspection have been met. Furthermore, there is evidence of improvements to both the home's operation and the outcomes for young people. As a result, the home has improved in effectiveness. Young people are now better protected from harm. Improvements have been made to risk assessments and these are now more specific about the needs of young people and how these are to be addressed. A member of staff commented, in relation to these improvements that, 'staff are clearer in what to do if young people go missing.' This is further enhanced through a significant improvement in staff consistency. Since the last inspection, incidents of non-familiar staff working in the home are exceptionally rare. As a result, young people are cared for by a staff team that are familiar, trusted and know the home and young people. Staff have received up to date training about specific vulnerabilities around sexually harmful behaviours and sexual exploitation. Therefore, staff are now better equipped to recognise and respond to any concerns. A social worker commented that, 'the young person has a specific risk assessment that is regularly reviewed.' Changes have been made to how young people's needs are assessed prior to arriving at the home. This ensures that any new young people are appropriately matched to the home. All staff are up to date with their training apart from a manager who is yet to complete equality and diversity training. This shortfall, to date, has had no demonstrable impact on young people's outcomes. Leadership and management has markedly improved. The home's statement of purpose has been revised, added to the organisation's website and copies sent to Ofsted. This ensures that all interested parties are able to review the home's stated aims and objectives. Similarly, there have been improvements to the monitoring and review systems. The organisation has made changes to the way independent	

visits are conducted to the home. These reports now ensure that the views of young people, staff and other relevant parties are explored. Furthermore, safeguarding issues are scrutinised and areas to improve are identified. This supports the management team in driving further improvements. This is effectively underpinned by thorough management review that ensures the home is regularly quality assured.

Young people are kept safe and are protected from harm. Since the last inspection, all staff files have been reviewed and checked for regulatory compliance. As a result, the management team know that all adults working in the home have been appropriately vetted and are suitable to work with young people. Incidents of challenging behaviour are reducing in the home and this correlates with improvements to young people's outcomes. Where young people's educational attendance has previously been sporadic, it is now regular and in excess of 95%. This is because young people are in positive routines and know what is expected of them. A teacher commented that, 'the young person has made a lot of progress over the last year.' A more settled staff team are now working cohesively to ensure that young people are encouraged and enabled to regularly attend. There have also been improvements with young people maintaining contact with their families. Staff provide appropriate and where necessary, discreet, support where young people spend time in their family homes. A parent commented that, 'the staff work well with me.' This ensures that young people maintain their sense of belonging and further promotes their emotional resilience.

Sanctions, where used, are appropriate and fair. This supports young people in developing an understanding of consequence to challenging behaviour. Although the recording system provides space for young people's comments, these are not always recorded. Furthermore, it is not clear from the records if young people are actively encouraged to voice their feelings about the use of such measures. There is no demonstrable impact on young people's outcomes as a result of this shortfall. Complaints from young people are rare and where they do occur, are appropriately managed. Similarly, where neighbours have raised concerns about the home, the organisation ensures that swift remedial action is taken. This promotes cohesion with the local community and also supports young people in developing socially responsible behaviours.

The home is well maintained and is attractively presented. Areas of the home have been redecorated since the last inspection and as a result, feels homely. This is acknowledged by comments from young people, 'the home looks nice now' and 'I like it here.'

The management and staff team have worked hard to make improvements since the last inspection and this reflects in a more settled and stable home. Two recommendations, to further improve practice, have been made.

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two young people with emotional and / or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/06/2015	CH - Full	Requires improvement
24/02/2015	CH - Interim	Declined effectiveness
24/07/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
25/03/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory progress

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

Recommendations

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

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 22 paragraph 4.11)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53 paragraph 10.11)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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