

SC381085

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 the local authority. It offers care and accommodation for up to two children who have experienced early childhood instability that has led to trauma and/or associated complex behaviours.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since December 2020.

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.

We last visited this setting on 17 November 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. This report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 June 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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: 9 April 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/04/2019	Full	Good
12/06/2018	Full	Good
15/03/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/07/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There is currently one child living at the home. The child is making some good progress.

Staff have been persistent in promoting the child's engagement in learning despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has included helping the child to produce a CV for a job interview.

Staff support and encourage the child to lead a healthy lifestyle. Staff ensure that the child has access to the relevant services for his physical, emotional and mental health. The child is supported by staff to attend his medical appointments and specialist services. As a result, the child's overall health needs are promoted.

Staff have taken time to build positive relationships with the child. They have developed a bespoke care package to meet his specific emotional needs. This is being managed in a sensitive way that gives the child a sense of self-worth.

The registered manager and staff have grasped the importance of family relationships for the child and promote these relationships well.

Staff are good at holding important conversations and key-work sessions with the child about a range of topics, including education, sexual health, healthy eating and the risk of self-harming. They also use these discussions to understand the child's wishes and feelings. This consultation helps him to feel valued.

The staff have access to the in-house therapeutic service to support their practice. This helps them to develop a better understanding of the child's vulnerabilities and risks.

The registered manager and staff have continued to develop positive working relationships with a wide range of professionals and the child's family. All those involved in the child's care are satisfied with the quality of care that staff provide.

However, the home does not provide a homely and nurturing environment. Not all aspects of the home are welcoming which gives it an institutional feel. For example, the lounge, dining area and the child's bedroom are impersonal and bare. This does not help the child to feel invested in the home.

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

The registered manager and staff write detailed risk assessments that give clear guidance and advice for staff to follow to reduce risk. However, these records are not kept up to date. This means that staff do not have the most up-to-date control measures to help to reduce risk further.

Staff do not have a good understanding of de-escalation techniques, or when to use them, to help manage challenging behaviours to keep the child and themselves safe.

For example, staff are reluctant to use physical intervention when there are serious concerns, or when the child is unable to regulate his emotions. As a result, this has led to situations escalating, damage being caused to the home and staff being assaulted. These are missed opportunities by staff to ensure that the child is better supported to manage his feelings.

The registered manager and staff lock some internal doors as a way of managing the child's behaviour. The kitchen and lounge doors are routinely locked. The registered manager does not regularly review this approach to ensure that such strategies are proportionate and necessary to keep the child safe. This places unnecessary restrictions on the child's ability to move freely around the home.

When the child goes missing from the home, staff act promptly and follow clear guidance from protocols for managing these situations. They ensure that when the child returns home, he is offered an interview with an appropriate professional.

The registered manager ensures that staff who work in the home are vetted thoroughly before they work with children. As a result, children are kept safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, managers have worked hard to ensure that all staff have continued to receive regular and practice-related supervision. This means that staff have had the opportunity to reflect on their practice and develop their learning.

The registered manager works closely with the child's family and professionals. This partnership means that the risks for the child are reducing over time.

The registered manager does not always use monitoring and review systems to help with his oversight of the home. For example, the registered manager was not aware of information missing from the fire risk assessment and incorrect information in the home's documentation. This prevents the registered manager from identifying areas for development and addressing shortfalls.

All staff have the required level 3 diploma in residential childcare. However, the registered manager does not always ensure that casual staff complete all the required refresher mandatory training in physical intervention, child sexual exploitation and food hygiene. This leaves casual staff without all the necessary learning and development they require to enable them to keep the child safe and improve their practice.

The registered manager has taken sufficient action to address the one requirement raised at the last inspection. This has resulted in improvements being made to provide better structure to the child's daily routine.

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
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a) (2)(b)(vii)(c)(i)) This particularly refers to the home having an institutional impression rather than nurturing and domestic feel.	2 July 2021
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;	2 July 2021

understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is serious concern about the child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12(1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)) This particularly refers to staff ensuring that risk assessments are up to date.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of the care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(c)(e)(f)(h)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that staff provide consistent care to the child and use internal monitoring systems more effectively.	2 July 2021
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and	2 July 2021

any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate, is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) This relates to ensuring that risk assessment relating to restricting the child's movement in the home is regularly reviewed.	
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)) This relates to ensuring that adequate precautions against risk of fire are in place and that the fire risk assessment is kept up to date.	2 July 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the barriers to the child's learning and ensure the appropriate support is provided. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.3)

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: SC381085

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: City of Stoke-On-Trent, 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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