

SC381085

Registered provider: Stoke On Trent City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

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

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 July 2017

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **Good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **Requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 24 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people are positive about the care and support that they receive and feel safe and comfortable in the home.
- Staff encourage young people to learn essential life skills in preparation for adulthood.

- Managers ensure that staff receive regular supervision and training to meet the needs of the young people in their care.
- Staff establish links with schools and colleges attended by the young people.
- Staff give practical and emotional support to young people who have difficulties with school attendance. Consequently, young people start overcoming barriers that have affected their learning.
- Staff work in partnership with other professionals so that young people receive the best support and guidance.
- Staff promote family contact so that young people are able sustain their close relationships with the people who are important to them.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The manager's monitoring of staff training does not help identify all members of staff's learning and achievements.
- The independent visitor's reports do not support improvements in the quality of care in the home.
- The manager has not ensured that the children's guide contains all relevant information about the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/07/2016	Full	Requires improvement
19/01/2016	Full	Requires improvement
28/09/2015	Full	Inadequate

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(h))	30/07/2017
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must produce a report, which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (1)(4)(a)(b))	30/07/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that the children's home produces a children's guide. The children's guide must be made available to all children when their placement in the home is agreed (or on arrival at the home if the placement is made in an emergency) and must be age appropriate, provided in an accessible format and explained to each child to make sure they understand it. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make good progress following their admission to the home. One social worker told the inspector, 'The young person I worked with has made enormous amounts of progress since being at [home name]'. Another social care professional remarked on the positive changes in the young person that they were working with,

saying, 'It is clear, in my view, that [name] may not have achieved so much without the skill and commitment of the manager and his team.'

Young people's placement plans take account of their assessed and individual needs. Plans are prepared with the involvement of the young people and their social worker. This means that staff have a clear understanding of their role to promote young people's well-being.

Young people have clear health plans and are registered with the relevant primary healthcare services. Young people understand the importance of good health and are supported by staff to attend physical and psychological health appointments. Medication is stored safely, and arrangements for the administration and recording of medication ensure that young people receive their prescribed medication safely.

Progress in education is positive, with one young person who previously had low engagement now working towards qualifications and undertaking a variety of educational activities. Another young person has completed GCSEs and is now investigating a college placement. Collaboration with education departments is positive, with one educational professional saying, 'When we have had ideas about [young person's] educational experience, the manager has always been willing to listen and adapt in order to achieve the best outcome for [young person].'

Young people are fully involved in day-to-day decisions in the home. They contribute their views through regular communication with staff. This helps to ensure that young people have ownership of decisions that directly affect them. Young people know how to make a complaint if they are unhappy or have any concerns about their care. This knowledge enables young people to practise their rights.

Contact arrangements support young people to maintain positive relationships with family and friends. Staff work closely with young people and their families to ensure that contact is safe and a positive experience.

Young people are supported to develop independence and life skills, relevant to their age, level of understanding and ability. Those young people who are eligible have pathway plans in place, and young people are well supported in working towards their individual goals.

Regular activities take place, such as trips to the cinema, and visits to places of interest. Young people make friends in the community and spend planned free time at friends' houses or in the community.

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

The manager ensures that young people are safe in the home. Staff fully understand policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding, and social workers confirm that staff keep young people safe, reporting, '[Young person's] safety has been paramount at all times.'

Managers and staff have good knowledge of individual young people's vulnerabilities. Staff make sure that each young person has a detailed risk assessment and management plan. Staff keep these plans under review and update them when

necessary. Staff supervise young people in line with their risk management plans to ensure that young people are safe in the home and in the community.

Staff use their positive relationships with young people to de-escalate challenging behaviours. Consequently, no physical interventions have been necessary since the last inspection.

Staff are aware of the procedures to take in the event of young people going missing from the home. This includes following individual protocols that identify the particular vulnerabilities of a young person. Very good communication between agencies ensures that appropriate action is taken to locate young people quickly and to promote their safe return.

Young people live in a home that provides physical safety and security. Regular health and safety checks on all electrical, gas and fire safety ensure that everyone is kept safe. Records show that young people and staff regularly practise evacuation of the building so that they know how to respond in the event of an emergency.

The staff recruitment and selection process is thorough, requiring a full assessment and checks of all applicants for work. These checks ensure that only suitable people care for young people who live at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home has an appropriately qualified registered manager in place. The manager has been in post since July 2016 and holds a diploma in leadership, health and social care at level 5.

The staff group is highly experienced and most staff are qualified. Those who are unqualified are in the regulatory period to obtain their qualification. Staff report that they feel they are well supported. They have regular formal supervision where they can discuss their own training and development needs, as well as the care of young people.

All staff complete a range of mandatory training. In addition, staff complete training in particular areas such as understanding mental health and the risks of radicalisation. This ensures that staff keep their skills and knowledge up to date and are competent in looking after young people. However, the manager's monitoring and reviewing of training is not accurate, and does not highlight what training staff have completed. This does not support identifying individual staff training needs.

The home's statement of purpose accurately describes how the home operates and how young people are cared for. This makes it possible for parents and social workers to have a clear understanding of services available. The home's children's guide requires updating so that young people know the home's rules around internet usage.

Monitoring and review of the home requires improvement. The independent visitor's analysis and evaluation of the care provided is not effective. This does not support the manager in improving the service and the care it provides to young people.

The manager promotes good working relationships with external professionals. A professional said, 'In my view, the communication between my team and the home was

excellent and the care that [name] was provided with was of the highest quality.' This collaborative approach means that young people are provided with a consistent approach and, because of this, they are better protected.

In response to the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection, staff training now meets the needs of each young person. The manager's review of care now captures the views of young people and other agencies. There have been improvements in staff recording, and the home now presents a more nurturing and supportive environment.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

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, Civic Centre, Glebe Street,
Stoke On Trent ST4 1HH

Responsible individual: Susan Hammersley

Registered manager: Christopher Whalley

Inspector

Dave Carrigan, social care inspector

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