

# 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 supports young people aged between the ages of 10 and 17 years. The home offers care and accommodation for up to two young people. The manager has been registered with Ofsted since July 2016.

**Inspection dates:** 12 to 13 June 2018

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | 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:** 15 March 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 15/03/2018      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 11/07/2017      | Full            | Good                    |
| 24/01/2017      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness  |
| 19/07/2016      | Full            | Requires improvement    |

## 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   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;<br/> help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (2)(iv)(x))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                        | 25/07/2018 |
| <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;<br/> an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and<br/> positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>strive to gain each child's respect and trust.<br/> understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(viii)(ix))</p> | 25/07/2018 |

### Recommendations

- Ensure that there is independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively

implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

## **Inspection judgements**

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Staff make sure that 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 good access to a range of general healthcare professionals and benefit from planned visits to the home by local healthcare advisers. This additional support successfully promotes their emotional health and raises young people's awareness of the risks associated with certain activities, such as smoking, substance misuse and sexual health. Medication is stored safely, and trained competent staff maintain records on the administration of medication.

Young people have a range of educational and employment-based placements available to meet their individual needs. However, attendance is poor for the young people who choose not to access their placements, despite regular support and encouragement from staff.

Young people contribute their views through regular meetings and constant communication with staff about daily decisions, such as the food they eat and the activities they pursue. This is enhanced by key-worker sessions that are regularly held with young people. However, some young people said that they did not always get on with some of the staff and believed that this hindered their relationships with them.

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

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding practice and the ways that they can protect the welfare of young people. There is good partnership working with agencies, such as the local authority, health professionals and the police, to ensure that there is a strong multi-agency approach to safeguarding young people. Staff ensure that risk assessments are comprehensive and realistic and contribute to safeguarding the young people in their care. A placing social worker told the inspector, 'Staff ensure that his risk management plans are updated when required and they go through these with [name] so he is aware of the procedures. Staff are very good at following the home's procedures and policies and understand the importance of keeping [name's] file up to date.'

When young people do go missing from the home, staff make sure that a detailed record is made that reflects a rigorous response. Staff are diligent in their efforts to ascertain the whereabouts of young people by searching and contacting family, friends and known acquaintances. Staff will contact the police and other relevant agencies to share

information and promote the young person's safe return. Young people can discuss any issues with an independent person. This gives them the opportunity to discuss the reasons why they went missing and for staff to take action to minimise this happening again in the future.

The manager ensures that there are established systems in place to maintain safe practices and to fulfil health and safety obligations. All staff working at the home have received fire safety training to enable them to minimise the risks to young people in the event of a fire at the home. Staff are trained in fire safety procedures and they ensure that young people take part in fire evacuation drills, so they understand how to leave the home safely in an emergency.

An appropriate vetting and selection process is employed when staff are recruited. This ensures that young people are protected from adults who may pose a risk to their safety and welfare.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: 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 manager sets high expectations for staff and young people. He uses staff meetings and supervision well to communicate the positive ethos of the home. Staff report that they find supervision helpful and supportive. Annual appraisals are used well to ensure that staff are provided with appropriate development opportunities.

Staff have good access to training opportunities to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills they need for their work with young people. All staff are qualified or working to gain a relevant qualification for their role.

An independent visitor calls at the home once a month to monitor and report on the quality of care. Some monitoring oversight is weak. For example, despite staff diligently looking for young people who go missing from care, the reports completed by the independent visitor do not provide sufficient scrutiny and analysis of this practice. This does not ensure that Ofsted has a good overview of the home between inspections.

Strong and positive relationships exist with families, the police and other professionals. This ensures that good all-round support is provided to young people to promote their progress. A social worker told the inspector, 'I am emailed whenever they have a detailed discussion with [name], as well as a summary weekly update. This ensures that I am aware of [name's] everyday life.'

Young people who are new to the home are not yet engaging in education, training or employment. This is a similar finding from the last inspection with other young people. This has resulted in the same requirement being raised again.

## **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 differences 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 whom 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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