

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC381085
Inspector	Mark Ryder
Type of inspection	Full
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	Linda Jane Dent
Date of last inspection	18/02/2014

Inspection date	15/05/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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This home is making a positive difference to young people's lives and in keeping them safe. Young people are generally pleased with their care plans and have good relationships with the staff. The environment is welcoming and friendly. Outcomes for young people are, however, varied in relation to health, education, independence into adulthood and social skills. Individual starting points reflect the differences in progress for each young person.

Young people confirm that they feel safe living at this home and are able to talk to staff freely. There is minimal use of physical restraint required as young people do not often present such behaviour. Staff have the experience and confidence in caring for young people with complex emotional and behavioural difficulties. Care plans reflect the diversity of need and how each young person should be supported during placement. Staff have a very good understanding of the needs of young people and provide a good quality of care. Social workers and independent reviewing officers report that young people are suitably placed and that they are satisfied with the quality of care provided.

The leaders and managers understand the areas of weakness as well as the strengths and have a clear plan for the development of this service. There is a Registered Manager in place although recent absence has required interim

management cover. There are, however, areas for improvement. Administration of records is not always well managed and internal monitoring review by the leaders and managers is inconsistent. Pathway plans and contact arrangements are not routinely updated. However, this does not presently negatively impact on the welfare of young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
12/12/2013	Full	good
27/03/2013	Interim	good progress
23/05/2012	Full	good

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
23 (2001)	ensure that any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably practicable free from avoidable risks in relation to lone working risk assessments (Regulation 23 (b))	19/06/2014
29 (2001)	maintain in the children's home the records specified in Schedule 4 and ensure that they are kept up to date in relation to the admissions and discharge register and staff employment details (Regulation 29 (1))	19/06/2014
34 (2001)	supply to HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted by him for the purposes of paragraph (1), and make a copy of the report available on	19/06/2014

	request to placing authorities where the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. (Regulation 34 (2))	
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Recommendations

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

- prepare young people to develop practical skills, including shopping, buying, cooking and keeping food, washing clothes, personal self-care, and understanding and taking responsibility for personal healthcare (NMS 12.1 (e))
- ensure that staff understand what decisions about contact are delegated to them in line with the child's care and placement plans, and to make those decisions in the child's best interests. (NMS 9.7)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people have made adequate progress since the start of their placements at this home. For some young people there have been notable educational achievements made. However, for others there has been only minimal progress.

Young people enjoy a reasonable healthy lifestyle and understand the necessity for a balanced diet and exercise. Young people engage in therapy which has benefited them in sharing their feelings and emotions with others. For some young people this is a significant development. The outcome is that for some young people they are able to socialise more than previously and are able to share their views and opinions. However, not all young people attend health appointments as required. While staff strongly support them to do so, outcomes in this area remain low.

Young people say they are able to see and speak to their family and friends by telephone or during visits. Staff promote safe contact and work effectively with parents and other family members. However, contact details are not kept up-to-date within care plans although this has limited impact on young people's ability to continue to maintain contact.

Young people are able to express their wishes and feelings to the staff. Young people are able to attend their statutory childcare review and contribute to the discussion about their placement and future plans. For those young people who do not wish to attend their review, their views are taken into account through consultation prior to the meeting. Young person say they are listened to and valued.

Young people's independent skills are promoted although there is inconsistency to this. For example, young people are not always encouraged to use public transport independently of staff. Pathway planning on some young people's files do not accurately reflect the barriers to independent living. This has led, to some extent, to only adequate progress being made for young people to develop necessary life skills.

Quality of care **good**

Staff provide a high level of individualised quality of care for young people. Young people benefit from a caring and supportive staff team that understands them well.

Care planning and review of the current arrangements for each young person is managed well at this home. Staff consult young people about their care plans and provide them with every opportunity to contribute to their own review meetings. A young person said that they go to these meetings and tell them, for example, what

they would like to do as a job when an adult. Equality and diversity of need is clearly recognised by a competent and supportive staff team who take into consideration the range of needs of the young people.

Young people are able to engage in a range of activities that are of interest to them. For example, young people are able to attend the local youth club while others enjoy art and design. Staff value the contribution by young people which is positively reflected in presenting young people's art work around the home.

Staff strongly promote education and work hard to address the barriers that some young people face. Educational packages are flexible to meet the needs of all young people. For example, an educational support agency provides home tuition for young people who are unable or unwilling to attend formal education. This has benefited young people who would have very limited opportunity to education if it was not available.

Educational attainment is encouraged and rewarded. For example, a young person is doing so well at school that they often receive student of the week merit awards for outstanding behaviour. This reflects a culture within the home that enables young people to do the very best they can to reach their potential.

Young people are able to taken proportionate and managed risks in line with their age, understanding and safety. Staff listen to and support young people and assist them to make good lifestyle choices.

Relationships between staff and young people are good natured and supportive. There are very few complaints regarding this home with none since the last inspection. Young people say they know how to make a complaint and feel able to do so if they need to.

Regular therapeutic consultation provided to the staff team help young people to continue to develop socially and emotionally. This has seen small but noticeable changes to some young people's behaviour. In addition, individual therapeutic intervention is flexible and adapted to the needs of the young people. Young people feel that such help is made at the right pace for them.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Staff promote a safe and caring environment in which young people can live and develop into adulthood. Care plans accurately reflect the risk factors for each young person. These are regularly reviewed and discussed with young people. Staff have a very good understanding of both young people and make daily safe and suitable decisions during the course of their shifts. Handover meetings provide detailed information to prepare for on-coming staff to work with the young people effectively.

There has been no missing from home episodes since the last inspection in February 2014. Staff are aware of the missing from home procedures and have regular contact with the local police both formally and informally. The protocol between the police and the home is regularly updated.

Safeguarding procedures and practice has improved since the last inspection. The leaders and managers have a good understanding of the process in referring safeguarding incidents to the local authority. Such incidents are written in detail and reflect the prompt action taken to safeguard and protect young people. The home is, therefore, operating in accordance with the local safeguarding board's procedures.

Young people confirm that they feel safe and that there is no bullying. Young people are able to identify staff that they can talk to in confidence if they have any worries. Keyworking sessions address areas of concern such as keeping safe, contact with family and relationships. This educates and enables young people to talk about and understand how to protect themselves in the future.

Lone working arrangements meet the local authorities policy although there is limited assessment of individual risk for staff to work with young people on their own. While there is no impact on this, there is the potential for staff not to be fully aware of individual issues affecting young people when working with them on their own.

There is a very low level of required behaviour management within this home. The use of sanctions is infrequent. There has been no use of physical restraint for several months. Young people confirm that staff treat them with respect and understanding. Boundaries are realistic and fair. Young people contribute to their own safety through talking with staff and being aware of risk taking behaviour.

Environmental health and safety measures are in place and ensure young people live in a home that is free from hazards. Fire safety is regularly checked and discussed with visitors as a part of the signing in process. Fire drills are carried out with young people ensuring that they are fully aware of what action to take in the event of a fire.

There is a stable staff team with one member of staff recruited since the last full inspection. Vetting and checks of new staff are rigorous and suitable. Therefore, young people are cared for by adults who have been suitably and carefully selected to work with them.

Leadership and management

adequate

The management of this home provides a secure and safe environment for young people to live. There is a Registered Manager in place who has been registered since 2008 and is qualified to level five diploma in caring for children and young people. However, the Registered Manager has been absent for a continuous period of 23 days although there are sufficient interim management arrangements in place that

adequately maintain the running of this home. Managers and leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses of the setting and have suitable development plans to make progress.

All previous requirements from the last inspection have been met. Young people have the opportunity to attend education, therapy and leisure activities where necessary. The welfare and safety of young people is central to the running of this home. Staff have a clear understanding of the needs of both young people and provide a warm and stimulating environment for them.

A previous recommendation regarding developing a lone worker risk assessment has not been satisfactory met. This has therefore escalated to a statutory requirement.

Staff are qualified and experienced in caring for young people with complex emotional and behavioural difficulties. They show a commendable commitment to the care of the young people. Staff also demonstrate resilience in maintaining positive relationships with young people who do not always engage well. Diversity of need is acted upon regardless of gender, race or disability. This promotes a culture within the home of acceptance and understanding.

Administration within this home is inconsistent and has the potential to negatively impact on the smooth running of this service. For example, records such as the admissions and discharge register, young people's contact arrangements, lone working risk assessments and recruitment data are either incomplete or incorrect. This does not, presently, follow the organisations own file retention policy.

The homes statement of purpose and young person's guide provide sufficient information for both young people and the local authority placement teams to understand the type of setting the home offers. The guide and statement are freely available within the home and young people confirm they are aware of the guide.

There are monthly visits by a senior member of the local authority to monitor the running of the home and the quality of care. These visits provide feedback to the staff to further develop the service. However, internal monitoring by the Registered Manager is not carried out at the required frequency and reports are therefore not submitted timely to Ofsted. The impact of this is that there is less regular scrutiny by the leaders and managers of this home. Equally, Ofsted is not able to review the quality of care between inspections and is therefore unable to determine the level of development of the service prior to statutory visits.

The staff have regular contact with a range of agencies that provide support and guidance within this home. This ensures that young people receive specialised services to enable them to develop emotionally and educationally.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.