

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	19/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC381085
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 Dent
Inspector	Matt Hedges

Inspection date	19/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC381085

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Support to young people who move into the home is variable.
- Important information is not always available to staff in a timely way.
- Some young people do not receive the information they need about the home before they move in.
- Managers do not always deploy staff effectively or with adequate planning.
- There are not always sufficient staff to meet young people's needs.
- Management arrangements are not robust. This has affected the speed of development.

The children's home strengths

- There has been improvement since the last inspection.
- Young people are now safe.
- Young people make significant progress in their education.
- Staff are aware of key safeguarding issues and take effective action.
- Young people receive individualised care.
- Staff engage young people in a range of positive and healthy activities.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard with particular reference to staffing, the registered person must: - (2)(d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child.	19/02/2016
14. The care planning standard 14. In order to meet the care planning standard, with particular reference to young people's admissions, the registered person must ensure that: - (b)(i) arrangements are in place to ensure the effective induction of each child into the home.	19/02/2016

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two young people with emotional/behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a Local Authority and only supports young people from their area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/09/2015	CH - Full	Inadequate
11/03/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/05/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
18/02/2014	CH - Interim	Inadequate progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
A small number of young people have recently moved into and out of the home, some leaving in very challenging circumstances. Support to these young people is inconsistent. Some experience exceptionally well-planned and well-supported transitions. A social worker confirms this stating, 'it was the best planned move I have ever been involved in'. In contrast, arrangements to support the induction of young people have not been effective. On one occasion, key information relating to a specific health need was not available in a timely way. The temporary manager was still writing guidance for staff on the day the young person moved in. Furthermore, changes required to the home's documentation (including the young people's guide) to ensure it was accessible, were not made in a timely way. Because of these shortfalls, staff were not adequately prepared and the young person did not have access to all of the information they required. Despite these shortfalls, young people are well 'matched'. Staff and young people develop strong relationships and enjoy spending time together and undertaking a range of positive activities. This improves the quality of their day-to-day experiences, increases their social skills and promotes their self-confidence. Staff increasingly seek young people's views which have started to influence the running of the home. Consequently, young people have been able to express their wishes in a number of areas, including arrangements to see their families. Staff sensitively support these wishes when appropriate. Young people make significant progress in their education. This is underpinned by good quality support from staff who have effective links with schools. A head teacher confirms this stating, 'communication and partnership working is great... I cannot praise the staff enough'. Staff help young people to develop their independence skills, encouraging cooking, shopping, budgeting and other household tasks. This helps to prepare young people for adulthood and equips them with the practical skills they need.	

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people are now safe and feel safe. There has been a significant amount of reflection and learning since the last inspection. Senior managers arranged for the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) to conduct a review (of all agencies) in relation to the support one young person received. Senior managers have taken swift, responsible action to address safeguarding concerns relating to the home. Risks are now well identified, understood and managed. Staff develop good knowledge and awareness of key safeguarding issues because of the training and guidance they receive. This includes missing from home, child sexual exploitation and e-safety. This ensures young people are safer. Missing incidents have decreased significantly. Staff are well equipped to support young people who self-harm. They offer sensitive and timely intervention. Parents talk positively about this, one stating, 'I have no concerns...I am really happy with the care they provide.' Consistent boundaries and clear expectations help young people develop a sense of security and well-being. Incidents are well managed and responded to appropriately. Incentive schemes are well used to promote positive behaviour and staff ensure that young people are praised for their achievements. This helps young people to manage their own behaviour and increases their self-esteem. Staff are knowledgeable about how to respond to allegations and disclosures. They support young people at these times and ensure effective liaison with other professionals. A social worker highlights this confirming, 'staff are really proactive'.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The registered manager has been away from the home for several months. A senior service manager took on day-to-day responsibility at that time. She is suitably qualified and experienced. The service manager took significant steps to improve the quality of the service provided and has driven improvement passionately. She has addressed the overwhelming majority of the shortfalls identified at the last inspection and has ensured the home now meets the	

objectives described in its statement of purpose. This has dramatically improved the quality of care young people receive and has ensured their needs are prioritised. In December, a new temporary manager took over this role until a registered manager is appointed. The assistant manager's role is also vacant. This has led to uncertainty for staff. These changes have slowed the speed of progression.

The deployment of staff is inconsistent. For example, on the day a young person moved to the home there were not sufficient staff to provide care to each young person. The temporary manager addressed this, but only hours before the young person's arrival. This leads to uncertainty for staff and impacts on the effectiveness of young people's inductions.

Monitoring and review systems are generally effective, and the majority of actions quickly addressed. These systems also helping managers to have a clear understanding of young people's progress.

Staff training is robust, team meetings are useful and staff receive regular supervision. Managers and peers induct new staff appropriately. Staff confirm this, talking positively about the guidance they receive.

Managers have developed positive relationships with young people's families and a range of partner agencies. Families and professionals talk positively about this. This ensures consistent care for young people and helps them feel more secure. Staff actively challenge other agencies when they do not meet young people's needs sufficiently. This ensures young people receive the support and services they require.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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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