

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	03/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC381089
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	03/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	Two compliance notices were issued on 20 October 2015. A monitoring visit took place on 7 December 2015 and both compliance notices had been complied with.
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	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC381089

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Numerous management changes have affected the progress of the home
- Managers do not consistently take effective action in relation to potential safeguarding concerns.
- Managers do not challenge other agencies/professionals adequately.
- Some young people's health needs are unmet.
- Some staff are inadequately trained.
- Sanctions' are not restorative in nature. Records in this area lack detail.

The children's home strengths

- The service has improved since the last full inspection.
- A core group of passionate, committed, knowledgeable staff build excellent relationships with young people.
- Young people make significant progress in a number of key areas.
- Young people rarely go missing. This is a significant improvement.

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
5. Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met In order to meet the engaging with the wider system standard, with particular reference to challenge, the registered person must ensure that:- (c) if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans.	04/03/2016
10. The health and well-being standard In order to meet the health and well-being standard, with particular reference to identifying and treating health concerns, the registered person must ensure:- (1) (a) the health and well-being needs of children are met.	04/03/2016
12. The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to sharing information, the registered provider must ensure that staff:- (2) (a) (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare.	04/03/2016
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to training, the registered person must:-	04/03/2016

(2) (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.	
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3) (a) (vii))	04/03/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 46 paragraph 9.38)

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
13/10/2015	CH - Full	Inadequate
23/03/2015	CH - Interim	Declined in effectiveness
22/10/2014	CH - Full	Good
18/02/2014	CH - Interim	Good progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
A significant amount of staff and management changes has affected the speed with which the service can improve. Despite this, young people receive individualised care from a small core team of committed, motivated and passionate staff. This has lessened the impact of the changes in the wider staff team. Young people develop strong relationships with key staff. This helps them to build trust and feel more secure. As a result, young people make progress in important areas of their life. This includes their behaviour and their education. Since the last inspection, young people's education attendance has increased overall, for some this is a highly significant step. Education providers talk positively about this. A teacher highlights, 'a huge improvement in attendance and attitude'. This ensures young people's attainment also increases. A young person proudly reflects, 'this is because I work hard.' Recently however, some young people's health needs have significantly affected their ability to access education. This has impacted on their academic work and their ability to study for exams. Staff support young people to attend medical appointments but fail to adequately challenge health professionals when their response is inadequate. Management oversight of this has not been robust. Consequently, the physical health and well-being needs of some young people are not met. This also affects their emotional well-being and the quality of their experiences on a day-to-day basis. Young people develop the independence skills they need as they approach adulthood. They grow in confidence and have clear aspirations. One young person highlighting that they want to train to be a social worker; another has a goal to join the armed forces. This gives young people a positive focus. Young people actively express their views. This is welcomed by staff who ensure they influence the way the home is run. Young people feel valued as a result. They talk positively about staff and the support they receive. Staff also develop positive relationships with young people's families. This helps young people to see more of the people that are important to them, safely.	

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Managers do not always take effective action in relation to potential safeguarding concerns. For example, on one occasion they failed to share key information with partner agencies, including the police, in a timely way. This hinders the effective assessment of risk, specifically in relation to friends that young people may spend time with. This also has the potential to cause confusion for staff about what information they should share, and who with. Despite this, the staff team have developed strong relationships with specialist policing teams, who talk positively about the home. One officer stating, 'the staff safeguard young people really well.' This collaborative approach informs the robust response when young people go missing or are thought to be at risk of child sexual exploitation. Young people are now safe as a result and are rarely reported missing. This is a significant improvement. A social worker talks positively about this reflecting, 'these concerns are reduced due to the response of staff and the relationships they build with young people.' Risks relating to drugs, alcohol and offending behaviour are identified and well managed by staff. Young people take increasing responsibility for their own actions and make commendable progress because of the support they receive. Staff understand the risks associated with self-harm and are able to respond appropriately should they be required to. Clear and consistent boundaries contribute to a feeling of security for young people. Staff respond effectively to incidents when young people become angry or distressed. Because of this, their behaviour improves. A youth offending worker highlights this in relation to a young person stating, 'they have made excellent progress, and they will now remove themselves from situations before things escalate. This is huge progress.' Staff celebrate and reward positive behaviour. On occasion, 'sanctions' are used in response to negative behaviour. These are proportionate; however, they are rarely restorative in nature. Consequently, they do not always help young people to recognise the impact of their behaviour on their peers, staff, or the wider community. In addition, records of 'sanctions' do not include an analysis of the effectiveness and any consequence of the measure. This does not allow staff to reflect on this area of their practice or develop improved strategies should these be required.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The registered manager has been away from the home since October 2015. There have been a number of temporary managers during this period. The service offered by the home has improved since the last inspection and meets the overarching objectives set out in its statement of purpose. However, the management changes have limited the speed of progress and affected the consistency of practice. This is not least due to the absence of an assistant manager until two weeks ago. The current acting manager has been in post since 7 December 2015. He is experienced and suitably qualified but is new to the authority. His relationship with some professionals and partner agencies is in its infancy. This limits the effectiveness of the challenge he can offer when their performance is not adequate or they fail to prioritise young people's needs. Staff talk positively about the support they receive from the acting manager. Supervisions are generally regular and effective. The majority of staff access good quality, regular training. In contrast to this, a small number of staff are insufficiently trained. They have not completed updates of their mandatory training as required by the home's own policies. This includes safeguarding and first aid training. This has the potential to affect their confidence and competence in these areas. The acting manager has failed to assess the impact of this and ensure that they have the skills and qualifications required to meet the needs of each young person. Consequently, young people may not receive the support and care they require. An independent person visits the home every month. Their analysis and reports have improved significantly. In addition, the acting manager now undertakes regular reviews of the quality of care provided by the home. These improvements ensure that the acting manager, now supported by an experienced assistant manager, is starting to understand the home's strengths and weaknesses. In addition, he can more accurately monitor the progress young people make. Due to this, he has started to identify shortfalls. However, planned improvements are yet to be implemented.	

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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