

SC381089

Registered provider: Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is managed by the local authority. It offers care for up to two children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. There are currently two children living in the home.

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. At the time of inspection, the manager had attended their fit person interview to determine their fitness to be registered. On 31 October 2024, the manager registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 October 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 29 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/01/2024	Full	Good
21/03/2023	Full	Good
31/08/2021	Full	Good
10/03/2020	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, one child has left the home, and one child has moved into the home. At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home and were spoken to as part of the inspection.

Children have made significant progress during this inspection period. Children feel safe and supported and their individual needs are understood. One child said they felt understood by staff when others do not understand them.

The two children are in the process of transitioning back to family care. While one child's move has been carefully planned, and in consultation with the team around the child, another child's plan is less certain. The manager advocates on children's behalf to ensure that appropriate provisions are in place prior to their move. Key-work discussions take place to help prepare children to move on. Children are encouraged to share their views on how they wish to mark leaving the home to promote positive endings.

Children have developed positive and trusting relationships with staff. Children said they want to maintain contact with staff once they leave the home.

Staff help children to develop their independence skills. Children are encouraged to complete their own assessment of their independence skills. Staff then help them to develop their skills, such as learning how to budget, prepare healthy meals and how to carry out other household tasks. These experiences raise children's self-esteem and prepare them for later life.

Staff have good relationships with parents and professionals. Communication from the manager and staff is very good. This forms a cohesive network around children so that messages are consistent, and expectations are managed.

Children's attendance at school is encouraged by staff. When there are barriers to children's education, staff work well with professionals and support children's learning at home.

The home environment requires improvement. The decor is tired and would benefit from investment. There are efforts made for the home to feel homely. There are photos of the children and of activities they have done with staff around the home, providing them with a sense of belonging. However, the home environment lacks celebration of children's achievements.

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

Staff form positive relationships with children. This is a significant protective factor in helping and managing incidents and behaviours. This is bolstered by multi-agency

working. There have been no physical interventions during this inspection period. Staff provide consistent boundaries and can identify triggers to explore behaviours before they escalate.

Staff have the skills and knowledge to keep children safe. Safeguarding concerns are acted on promptly. There is a good understanding by staff around children's privacy and the requirement to keep them safe.

Positive behaviour is consistently promoted, and rewards outweigh consequences. A range of rewards and incentives are used to recognise and celebrate achievements and do not focus on financial reward systems. Praise offered to children will contribute towards their pride, self-esteem and independence.

Leaders ensure that staff are safely recruited to support children. The staff team is stable and agency staff are not used, although the deputy manager position is vacant. This ensures that consistency of care is maintained and enables children to form good relationships and attachments to the staff that care for them.

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

Monitoring systems are ineffective. There are widespread issues with staff signing documents relating to children's care and documents being filed incorrectly. The manager failed to identify and respond to deficits in record-keeping. There are shortfalls in children's files being kept up to date. This does not provide assurance that staff understand the care children should receive.

Training records are not up to date and do not give an accurate reflection of the training that has been completed by staff. Some staff had not updated the organisation's mandatory training within the required timescales. It is not clear how the monitoring of training is being conducted by the manager or the provider.

The manager is new to the role and is responsible for two homes. He does not have the support of a deputy manager, and this has impacted on internal monitoring systems. The manager acknowledges his areas of strengths and development, which will stand him in good stead for improvements to be made.

The manager forms strong networks with professionals. The manager regularly consults them to review children's risks and progress. This contributes to a network of support for children, with the aim to achieve better outcomes.

The manager is well regarded among staff. Staff say they are happy to work in this home and feel supported by the manager. This means that staff work in an environment where they feel valued.

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, The 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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h)) In particular, the manager must ensure that staff complete the organisation's mandatory and house-specific training. The manager must have robust quality assurance and monitoring systems in place. They must also have effective oversight of the home to improve the quality of care provided in the home.	12 December 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children's case records are kept up to date. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home provides a nurturing, supportive and homely environment that meets the needs of the children. This specifically relates to ensuring that the home environment is updated so as to not appear tired and worn. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC381089

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Registered provider address: Floor 2, Civic Centre, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 1HH

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Paul Barker

Inspectors

Tonia Dubidat, Social Care Inspector

Nateisha Cardoza-Evans, Social Care Inspector

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