

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	22/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC387784
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	Helen Malanaphy
Inspector	Matt Hedges

Inspection date	22/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC387784

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff support young people well and help them to make good progress.
- Young people feel safe and are safe.
- Relationships with other professionals are strong and effective.
- Young people's moves into the home are well assessed, planned and supported.
- The registered manager is highly competent and leads the team well.
- Some shortfalls are evident. The majority of these are errors relating to record keeping.

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 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12. The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to physical restraint, the registered provider must ensure that staff: (2)(a)(vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare.	28/02/2017

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that records enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- 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)
- Ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A local authority operates the home. The home only supports young people from the local authority's area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/01/2016	Full	Good
17/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
27/11/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Relationships between staff and young people are very strong. The staff team is small and very consistent. This helps young people to build trusting relationships with staff. This is evident in their day-to-day interactions. For example, one young person lets staff take some of his cuddly toys home with them. This is on the understanding that the toys do fun things. Staff prove this by taking photos of what they get up to! Relatives are positive about the care that staff provide. One highlighted they were particularly pleased that staff 'provide lots of cuddles'. Staff talk to young people and involve them in decisions about their care. This gives young people some control and helps them to feel empowered. A young person's relative noted, 'They involve young people in decisions and it makes them feel like they are at home.' Staff are committed to young people and to making sure they get the support that they need. As a result, young people receive highly individualised care. This helps them to make progress in key areas of their life. A member of one young person's family commented, 'The home is fantastic. They are more settled than anywhere else. They are making progress and are much more outgoing. This is because staff understand them.' A mental health professional stated, 'Staff know young people really well and they offer a really personalised service.' Young people's attendance and engagement in education increase. For some young people, this is highly significant progress. As a result, they achieve academically and have high aspirations. For example, one young person is focusing on going to university after college. Education providers are very positive about the work of the staff team. One teacher stated, 'All the staff have been fantastic... and the registered manager has been really great.' Young people's self-esteem and confidence grows. Some show great bravery and engage well in the therapeutic support they are offered. Over time, this will help to develop their emotional resilience and well-being. Young people develop good independence skills, appropriate to their age. These skills include practical tasks such as shopping, household chores and cooking, all of which helps to prepare them as they grow towards adulthood. Since the last inspection, one young person has left the home. Staff offered good support at this time. Another young person has moved in. The registered manager made sure that this move was extremely well assessed and planned. This helped to	

prepare staff and helped the young person to settle quickly.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The staff team is knowledgeable about the risks young people face. Generally, the team assesses risk well and works proactively to reduce this. Consequently, young people feel safe and are safe. Staff support young people to use their time positively. Young people generally make good choices. For example, they do not misuse drugs or alcohol and do not engage in criminal activity. Young people rarely go missing. Staff are mindful of the issues that this can present, including the risk of exploitation. This helps them to highlight these issues to young people and talk about how young people can keep themselves safe. Staff make sure that young people receive clear and consistent boundaries. Consequently, young people feel secure. This reduces their anxieties and their behaviour improves. Incidents when young people threaten to harm themselves are sensitively managed by staff, who are well trained in this area. This has resulted in a significant decrease in the number of incidents of this nature. Sanctions are sometimes used in response to negative behaviour. Records of these measures and are not always clear. Specifically, they sometimes lack detail about why staff chose to use a particular approach. As a result, it is not always immediately clear that these measures were proportionate. This is unhelpful to young people who may wish to read these records in the future. It could also prevent the registered manager and staff from easily reviewing the use of sanctions. This could hinder them from identifying how successful their practice is, and responding promptly when issues or trends emerge. Staff use physical restraint at times. These interventions are generally brief and are used to keep staff and young people safe. The registered manager usually makes sure she has good oversight of these incidents. She talks to young people afterwards and explores their feelings, sharing this information with social workers and other professionals when required. However, on one isolated occasion the registered manager did not take effective action. Specifically, she did not adequately explore a young person's comment that they had been hurt during an incident. Other safeguards, and the young person's relationships with staff, minimised any negative effect on the young person. The registered manager deals with complaints and allegations efficiently and makes	

sure that other relevant professionals are involved when required. However, records of these incidents are variable. On one occasion, the records were unclear. Specifically, staff had not carefully detailed the number of staff involved in an incident, or the actions that they had taken. This hinders the registered manager's oversight.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
An experienced, suitably qualified registered manager leads the staff team. She has been registered with Ofsted since 2010. She inspires her staff and makes sure that young people's needs are always prioritised. The registered manager regularly audits the quality of care provided and the impact this has on the progress and experiences of young people. This helps her to identify strengths and tackle the majority of weaknesses. Consequently, she has rectified all of the shortfalls from the last inspection. She also makes sure that staff continue to meet the aims and objectives outlined in the home's statement of purpose. There are plans in place to improve the quality of some records. In addition to the shortfalls mentioned above, staff do not keep all records up to date. The fact that staff know young people so well reduces the seriousness of this shortfall. The registered manager provides staff with good support. Staff are well trained and the majority hold the required diploma in residential childcare or a suitable equivalent. There are clear plans in place to help the few staff that are still working towards this. Team meetings and supervision sessions are regular and effective. In addition, senior managers have commissioned a psychologist to offer consultations to all staff. The registered manager involves a wide range of other professionals including teachers, education support workers and social care staff in these sessions. This improves the consistency of care young people receive. Young people feel secure because of this. A head of a virtual school highlighted this as particularly strong practice for one young person. He felt that the group of professionals involved with the young person are 'as close to one team as you could get'. These systems directly improve the quality of care young people receive and the progress they make. The registered manager and staff have developed good relationships with a wide range of professionals and with young people's friends and families. Staff actively challenge other agencies if this is required and offer help and support outside of their usual role. For example, staff are taking over the responsibilities for arranging and supervising some family visits. This helps young people to stay in touch with	

those closest to them, in a safe way.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 that 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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