

SC408369

Registered provider: Stoke on Trent City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 May 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 22 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- Young people are positive about the care and support that they receive and feel safe and comfortable in the home.
- The manager ensures that care planning is individualised and enables staff to focus on each young person's identified needs.
- The manager ensures that all young people are engaged in education.

- Managers ensure that there is good support for young people in preparing them for independence and transition to adulthood.
- Staff support relationships that are important to young people and work hard to maintain safe and appropriate contact with their families.
- Young people are encouraged to have their say in the running of the home, through participation in regular house meetings and key work sessions.
- Staff work collaboratively with other professionals to ensure that young people receive the best support and guidance.
- The manager ensures that young people are involved in a wide range of activities in the community.

The children's home's areas for development

- The manager has not ensured that the home's location risk assessment identifies all the potential risks in the area.
- The manager has not ensured that external monitoring reports scrutinise and evaluate shortfalls to support service development.
- The manager has not ensured that the complaint's process is included in the home's children's guide.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/10/2016	Full	Good
10/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
27/08/2015	Full	Good

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, 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
7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must— (2)(d) ensure that an explanation is given to each child as soon as reasonably practicable after the child's arrival about— (i) the children's guide; (ii) how to make a complaint or representations in relation to the home or the care the child receives, and how any such complaint or representations will be dealt with;	20/05/2017
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year, taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1)(2))	20/05/2017

Recommendation

- Ensure that there is independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people continue to live in a safe, caring and supportive environment that enables them to make good progress in many aspects of their lives. There have been notable improvements in outcomes for young people, relating to their health, safety and education attendance. This is a result of a committed and experienced staff team.

Young people's placement plans take account of their assessed and individual needs. Plans are prepared with the involvement of the young people and their social worker, who said, 'Staff understand her so well, they are able to tailor the support directly around her needs. They are not happy to just meet her basic needs, they go above and beyond and really think out of the box.' This means that staff have a clear understanding of their role to promote the well-being of young people.'

Young people have clear health plans and are registered with the relevant primary healthcare services. Staff receive clinical oversight from an independent psychologist that helps them to develop strategies to improve the emotional well-being of young people. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the safe administration and recording of medication.

Young people's attendance and engagement with education is good. Young people attend school regularly. When issues do arise in the school, staff are pro-active in helping young people address the issues, so that any disruption in young people's education is minimal.

The manager works closely with placing authorities to promote contact with family and friends that is positive and safe. This ensures that young people continue to build relationships and attachments with those significant to them.

Young people are fully involved in day-to-day decisions in the home. They contribute their views through regular meetings and regular communication with staff. This helps to ensure that young people have ownership of decisions made in the home. Young people confirm that they know how to make a complaint if they are unhappy or have any concerns about their care.

The manager considers all potential new admissions and ensures that the staff team can meet the identified needs of young people. This results in good placement stability and progress made by young people in this home. This is evidenced by the fact that young people have lived at the home for a number of years. One young person recently transitioned from the home to independent living accommodation. The young person was able to make the transition successfully due to the support and guidance received from the staff. This reflects the strong focus placed on preparing young people with the skills they will need to make a successful transition to adult life.

Young people are involved in a range of activities, such as the army cadets, swimming, trips to the cinema, and enjoy holidays and visits away from the home. This helps them to make new friendships in the community and gives them a chance to try different experiences and develop new skills.

Managers ensure that the home is well maintained, comfortable and homely. Young people have personalised their bedrooms to reflect their own tastes and identity. This helps young people develop a sense of belonging and ownership.

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

Young people told the inspector that they feel safe in the home and are confident that they live in a safe environment. One young person said, 'I am safe because the staff here are amazing. They are caring and nice to you.' A social worker validated this, saying, 'The staff are very good at keeping her safe, they allow her to take managed risks appropriate to her age.'

The manager ensures that there are comprehensive risk assessments in place for each young person. The staff safeguard young people by using these assessments to help them to identify risks and vulnerabilities and by having strategies that minimise these risks.

There have been no reported incidents of young people going missing from the home since the last inspection. The manager has ensured that the home has a clear protocol for responding to and managing these incidents in order to secure the safe return of young people if they do go missing. The manager and staff work with the police and the local safeguarding team effectively to ensure that information about young people is appropriately shared and that young people can be protected in the community.

Physical restraint is a rare occurrence in the home and only ever used as a last resort to safeguard a young person or others. Incidents are fully recorded with evidence of good management oversight and monitoring. This helps identify patterns and trends to inform future practice, and reduce incidents.

The manager ensures that young people live in a physically safe environment. Staff undertake regular health and safety checks and make sure that equipment is regularly serviced. Staff are trained in fire safety procedures, and they ensure that young people take part in fire evacuation drills so they understand what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency.

The manager ensures that young people are protected by thorough recruitment practices. Staff are vetted and assessed as suitable before any appointment is confirmed. These measures positively promote the safety of the young people by preventing unsuitable adults from working with them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has an appropriately qualified registered manager in place. The manager has been in post since March 2015 and holds a diploma in leadership health and social care at level 5.

The manager ensures that staff are well supported through regular supervision and annual appraisals and benefit from a range of appropriate training to develop their knowledge and skills. Most staff are qualified. Those who are unqualified are in the regulatory period to obtain their qualification. This ensures that staff keep their skills and

knowledge up to date and are competent in looking after young people.

The statement of purpose clearly demonstrates the aims and objectives of the home. This makes it possible for parents or placing authorities to have a clear understanding of services available. However, the home's children's guide contains the wrong staffing information and does not give young people information on how to make a complaint. This means that young people are not being provided with accurate and important information about the home they live in.

The manager ensures that monitoring visits from someone independent of the home take place each month. The reports resulting from these visits lack scrutiny and evaluation, and do not ensure that there are fully effective systems in place to monitor the quality of care provided to young people. This does not support the home's development or the manager's internal monitoring.

The manager has formed positive relationships with a range of agencies including the police, youth offending service and education departments. A social worker said, 'The home is very good at staying in touch with me, they send me daily updates. I get regular phone calls. It couldn't be better.' This means that there is a coordinated approach to meet young people's needs.

The manager has not ensured that the home's location risk assessment reviews the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises. This means that any risks presented by the home's location are not being identified, along with the strategies for managing them.

The manager has taken action to address the requirements and recommendations from the last inspection. The managers' review of care now includes the opinions of others, and some internal refurbishment has taken place to improve the home's interior. This shows that managers actively respond to identified shortfalls in order to maintain a quality service.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

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: SC408369

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Susan Hammersley

Registered manager: Dean Wilton

Inspector

Dave Carrigan, social care inspector

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