

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	04/10/2016
Unique reference number	SC408369
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
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	Matt Hedges

Inspection date	04/10/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved 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

SC408369

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make good progress.
- Staff vigorously support young people to achieve in their education.
- Working relationships with other agencies are strong.
- Staff generally understand the risks that young people face and manage them effectively.
- The registered manager is highly effective and leads the team well.
- Some shortfalls are evident. These include isolated incidents when staff did not take appropriate action, aspects of staff training, and deficits in the quality and clarity of some records.

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 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 going missing and safety issues within the home, the registered provider must ensure that staff— (2)(a)(vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare.	04/11/2016
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to training, the registered provider must— (2)(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.	04/11/2016
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child, which are kept up to date. (Regulation 36(1)(b))	04/11/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that staff encourage children to share any concerns about their care or other matters as soon as they arise. Children must be able to take up issues or make a complaint. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.13)
- Ensure that guidance clearly shows that, although there may be circumstances where a child can be prevented from leaving the home – for example, a child who is putting themselves at risk of injury by leaving the home to carry out gang-related activities, use drugs or to meet someone who is sexually exploiting them or intends to do so – any such measure of restraint must be proportionate and in place for no longer than is necessary to manage the immediate risk. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 48, paragraph 9.52)
- Ensure that, in a situation that requires the use of physical restraint, staff

use their professional judgement, supported by their knowledge of each child is risk assessment, plans and an understanding of the risks the child faces. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 48, paragraph 9.53)

- 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 children or young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A local authority operates the home. The home supports only young people from the local authority's area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
27/08/2015	Full	Good
18/03/2015	Interim	Declined effectiveness
23/10/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	Good
Young people have good relationships with staff. They receive highly personalised care and talk positively about living in the home. One young person stated, 'Staff are lovely and kind. It is good, living here.' Another young person explained, 'The staff are giving everything, they are helping me out a lot.' Because of this support, young people make good progress in key areas of their life. Staff work tirelessly to support young people in their education. Young people are positive and motivated, as a result. Consequently, young people's attendance is excellent, enabling them to achieve more academically. One young person has recently moved to a new school. A teacher commented, 'The transition was very good, we met with the registered manager and the staff. There was good sharing of information.' The head of the virtual school also highlighted, 'The registered manager and staff were very tenacious (in securing a place at the new school). They are highly supportive... the registered manager inspires confidence in education providers.' This has ensured better support for the young person and safeguarded their access to a full-time education programme. Staff make sure that young people's physical health needs are met. Young people also make good progress in relation to their emotional well-being. For some young people, this is highly significant. This improvement is possible because of effective links with specialist mental health services that support young people. Staff practice is also improved through advice and guidance from a psychology service, commissioned by senior managers in the organisation. The result is accurately summarised by a social worker, who stated, 'The team is more therapeutically minded, now.' Young people benefit from this. Staff offer good support to young people approaching adulthood. They work sensitively to address young people's anxieties and help them to develop the practical skills that they need, balancing this with the need to keep young people safe. Young people are encouraged to undertake a range of positive activities. This includes cadets, horse riding, dance and many others. This provides young people with the chance to expand their social networks. It also develops their social skills and improves their day-to-day experiences. One young person reflected, 'I am always really busy.' The registered manager is committed to ensuring that young people's views inform the care that they receive. Generally, staff manage complaints swiftly and young	

people are well supported. On one occasion, staff did not respond appropriately and did not provide a young person with a complaints form in a timely way. This did not allow the young person to share their concerns as soon as they arose. The impact of this was minimal, due to the other safeguards and processes in place.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people are safer, because of the support that they receive from staff. Young people confirm this, one stating, 'I feel safe here.' Staff generally identify, assess and understand the risks that young people face. Young people do not go missing. This reduces the risk of other concerns, including child sexual exploitation. Despite this, staff are well informed. They are realistic and work proactively to reduce the likelihood of these incidents occurring in the future. Staff also work closely with young people's families, when this is in the young person's best interests. This helps young people to be safer when outside of the home or seeing their relatives. Staff have a good understanding of how to support young people who may harm themselves. Staff respond appropriately and sensitively at these times. This has reduced incidents of this nature. It also gives young people a sense of security. The management team monitors the vast majority of health and safety practices well and addresses issues quickly. This includes measures to reduce the risk of fire. Staff, visitors and young people are safer, as a result. Staff manage incidents effectively when young people are highly distressed, angry, or aggressive. In contrast, on one occasion, staff failed to take effective action following an incident. This incident involved a young person being able to open an upstairs window and sit on the window ledge. In particular, staff did not ensure that new window restrictors were fitted in a timely way. This delay left the potential for further incidents to occur. The recording of another incident is poor. Specifically, the account of the incident in the logbook does not match the account on the incident form. Consequently, it is impossible to evidence whether staff took adequate action when a young person initially walked away from the home. The short time period involved and the subsequent actions of staff reduce the seriousness of this shortfall. However, the written account would be unhelpful to the young person if they wished to view their records in the future. On some occasions, physical restraint is required in order to keep young people safe. These restraints are appropriate and undertaken by suitably trained staff. Oversight from the registered manager is good. In addition, senior managers provide robust monitoring of the action taken. Staff also share information quickly	

with young people's social workers.

Some aspects of the guidance relating to physical restraint are unclear and lack important detail. For example, the guidance relating to when staff can prevent young people from leaving the home (or an area of the home) is not sufficiently detailed. It does not clarify when this would be acceptable. Neither does it overtly state that any measure of restraint should be in place for no longer than is necessary to manage the immediate concern. Nor do young people's plans highlight the risks associated with using restraint or include the impact on the young person of having their liberty restricted.

The shortfalls in relation to physical restraint have had no impact on the care of young people, to date. However, they have the potential to affect the professional judgement of staff when assessing these situations. This would be particularly problematic for new staff, or casual staff who may not have longstanding relationships with young people.

The registered manager addresses complaints and allegations against staff thoroughly. He monitors the performance of staff vigorously and strives to improve standards. This protects young people and makes sure they receive a good-quality, professional service. Senior managers are actively involved in the oversight of safeguarding issues. This provides additional scrutiny, when required.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
A suitably qualified registered manager leads the staff team. Ofsted registered him in March 2015. He is enthusiastic and committed to achieving excellence. He understands young people's needs and keeps them at the centre of his practice. This approach has led to improvements within the team and the quality of service that the young people receive. One social care professional stated, 'The registered manager is doing an amazing job, he really pushes his team and they are responding well.' The registered manager has addressed all of the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. Monitoring systems are effective. They identify the majority of the home's strengths and weaknesses. They also help the registered manager to confirm that the team consistently meets the aims and objectives identified in the statement of purpose. The management team continually assesses the progress that young people make. Strong relationships with a wide range of other agencies complement this. These relationships allow staff and the registered manager to challenge the practice of other professionals, when required. This ensures that young people have the	

support and services that they need.

In contrast, the registered manager has not made sure that staff keep all young people's case records up to date. For example, some contact details for young people's social workers and other professionals are incorrect. The close working relationships developed with these workers, and the other communication systems in place, mean that there is little impact on young people.

Staff are well supported and are positive about the management team in this regard. Supervisions are regular and effective, as are team meetings. Staff are appropriately qualified. The vast majority hold the required level 3 diploma in residential childcare or an equivalent. Any staff who do not hold this are working towards it and have clear plans in place to attain it. Staff training is generally good and covers key areas of practice. However, a small number of staff have not completed all of their required training. Although there are plans in place to address this, the response has been slow. As a result, a minority of staff do not have up-to-date training covering issues such as restraint or the risk of suicide, self-harm or ligature use. Consequently, some staff are unable to work in certain circumstances and do not have the skills required to meet the needs of each young person.

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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