

SC408369

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 run by the local authority. It offers care for up to two children who have experienced early childhood trauma.

The manager is suitably qualified and has been registered with Ofsted since September 2020.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be 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 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/06/2021	Full	Good
03/09/2019	Full	Good
08/05/2018	Full	Good
02/05/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, there was one child living at the home. This child is making good progress and was preparing to make a planned transition to semi-independent accommodation. Another child who was living at the home moved to live with their family.

The registered manager and staff manage children's moves into and on from the home well. They seek relevant information from the placing authority about the child's care plan and, when necessary, the registered manager will raise her concerns with the local authority when plans are not in the child's best interest. As a result, children have minimal disruption when moving on from the home and are better prepared in taking the next steps to independence.

Staff work alongside the in-house therapists and other professionals to provide children with individual and bespoke care. For example, staff receive bespoke training on the therapeutic model to engage children to provide good care which meets children's needs. This approach is embedded in staff practice to help children to make progress. When staff adopt and use these strategies to meet children's needs, they are effective. As a result, there has been a reduction in significant incidents in the home.

Some staff have positive relationships with children and know them quite well. These staff have a good understanding of the children's behaviours and vulnerabilities. They show resilience and compassion, and this helps children to begin to develop trusting and meaningful relationships. The child told the inspector: 'I love it here. If I could stay here I would, they [staff] are the best.'

Staff support children well to maintain important and positive relationships with family members. They maintain effective communication with social workers and other professionals to review the arrangements for children. Staff show a good understanding of the importance of children spending meaningful time with their families and will go to great lengths to ensure that family connections remain intact. As a result, children benefit from a strong sense of belonging and identity.

Staff ensure that children's health needs are consistently met to a good standard. They liaise with health professionals to implement health plans for children and ensure that recommendations from health plans are acted upon. Children regularly attend appointments with the dentist, general practitioner and optician and specialist services. As a result, children's physical and emotional health are consistently promoted.

Teachers confirm that children have good school and further education attendance and are making progress. Staff have realistic expectations for children making progress in their learning and educational achievements. They are keen to support

children by attending statutory meetings, as well as keeping in close communication with teachers. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points and their achievements are celebrated by staff.

Despite this positive progress, staff do not always promote equality and diversity well. Staff do not always ensure that children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities are met. For example, the cultural needs of one child's hair and skin care are not promoted consistently. In addition, staff do not routinely provide the child with meals that reflect the child's culture, despite the fact this child has been living at the home for some time. This creates a missed opportunity to promote the child's identity and celebrate their cultural heritage.

The physical environment of the home is welcoming, comfortable and nurturing. Children take pride in their bedrooms and are encouraged to personalise them in line with their wishes. Children's achievements are proudly displayed in the home. However, other aspects of the home need improvement. For example, the front garden fencing and gates need replacing and maintenance work is required inside the home. The registered manager has a plan to address this.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff ensure that risk assessments outline the known risks to children's safety and provide clear guidance on how to reduce risks and manage them. However, staff do not always ensure that they act on information contained in these documents. Staff do not always show professional curiosity and vigilance. For example, on several occasions, staff failed to follow guidance on monitoring one child's electronic devices when there was a possible risk.

Staff do not use key-work sessions well to help children keep safe. For example, staff do not always support children by talking about their trauma and risk. Staff fail to complete work identified in their risk assessment to help the child learn about online safety and mobile phone safety.

While staff carry out some good work with children to help them understand how to behave more positively, this is inconsistent. For example, staff have missed opportunities to have important conversations with children. This means that children are not always getting enough support and guidance from staff to help them develop essential skills to progress.

Not all staff are confident in knowing how to support children in times of crisis. On occasions, this lack of knowledge and support has led to situations in the home escalating and being poorly managed. Managers do not recognise this and take action to improve. In addition, records of restraint do not always contain the relevant information as required.

Incidents of children going missing from the home are rare. However, when children go missing, staff are responsive. They follow procedures by looking for children and

liaising with the police and other local services effectively. These measures promote children's safety and demonstrate that staff care about them and want them to return home safely.

Safer recruitment practice in the home is good. The registered manager is diligent and thorough when examining recruitment records. This helps to ensure that only suitable people are employed to care for the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is very committed and strives to ensure that both the children and staff reached their full potential. She is reflective and considerate of the welfare and well-being of the children and the staff who care for them.

The registered manager articulates an in-depth understanding of the therapeutic model used in the home. She demonstrates this successfully to the staff and creates a positive culture within the home. This enables staff to support children to make progress physically, socially and emotionally.

When the registered manager has concerns about children's care and transition plans, she is quick to respond. She escalates her concerns to the local authority so that the child's best interests are promoted. She challenges the rationale and decision-making process as appropriate. Consequently, professionals work more collaboratively in planning children's care.

Children know how to make a complaint. The registered manager is quick to review information, act on complaints and investigate promptly. She provides feedback to children with the outcomes of investigations. As a result, children feel listened to and that their views are important. They also know that the registered manager will take complaints seriously.

Staff confirmed to the inspector that they feel supported by the registered manager and deputy manager. Overall, staff receive regular and practice-related supervision. However, the quality of supervision that staff receive is variable. For example, the deputy manager's supervision does not always enable staff to reflect on how their own feelings and behaviour may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for.

The registered manager has worked hard to ensure that the core staff team receives a wide range of training. This has recently included training to improve the staff's understanding of child development and pregnancy. This training has provided staff with additional knowledge and skills on how to keep children safe. However, the registered manager has not ensured that all staff continue to receive refresher training. This delay has the potential to compromise the staff's ability to update their knowledge and skills to care for children.

Overall, the registered manager uses monitoring and review systems well to help her to have a good oversight of the running of the home. However, systems in the

home to monitor children's safe use of electrical devices have been overlooked. The registered manager acknowledged this shortfall.

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
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(iv)) This particularly refers to the registered manager ensuring that staff are skilled in meeting the cultural needs of children.	1 July 2022
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— an understanding about acceptable behaviour. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;	1 July 2022

encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(b) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(v)(ix)) This particularly refers to staff helping children to explore their emotions and understand their behaviours.	
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)) This particularly refers to staff ensuring that they understand and follow children's risk assessments.	1 July 2022
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—	1 July 2022

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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)) This particularly refers to the registered manager ensuring that all staff receive refresher mandatory training. Also, to ensure that they use internal monitoring systems more effectively.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)) This particularly relates to the registered manager ensuring that all staff receive practice-related supervision.	1 July 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand and apply behaviour management strategies and keep this under review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)

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: SC408369

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Registered provider address: Swann House, Boothern Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 4SY

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Medan Case-Peart

Inspector

Patrick McIntosh, Social Care Inspector

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