

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	27/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC408369
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	Dean Wilton
Inspector	Matt Hedges

Inspection date	27/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Declined effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	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	Requires Improvement

SC408369

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff respond well when young people go missing or are subject to child sexual exploitation.
- Young people make good progress in education because of support they receive from staff.
- Relationships between staff and young people are strong.
- The home has excellent relationships with other agencies, including the police. This has a positive impact on young people's lives and helps them to be safer.
- Young people are well supported to move into and out of the home, despite challenging circumstances.
- Several shortfalls were identified at this inspection. These relate to record keeping, and some aspects of management oversight.

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12. The protection of children standard 12. In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to assessing harm, the registered person must ensure:- (2) (a) (i) 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.	23/10/2015
13. The leadership and management standard 13. In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to staffing, the registered person must: (2) (d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child.	23/10/2015
The registered person must ensure that a copy of the statement of purpose is published on the home's website unless the registered person considers that such publication would prejudice the welfare of children in the home. (Regulation 16 (4))	23/10/2015
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes a description of the measure and its duration. (Regulation 35 (3) (a) (iv))	23/10/2015
The registered person must ensure that when the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2) (a))	23/10/2015
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the	23/10/2015

independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4) (a) and (b))	
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Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to 2 children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is managed by a Local Authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2015	CH - Interim	Declined in effectiveness
23/10/2014	CH - Full	Good
18/03/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress
14/01/2014	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Staff and young people have strong relationships and enjoy spending time together. Staff talk positively about young people and have high aspirations for them. Because of this support, young people make good progress in key areas of their lives. For example, their attendance in education increases. For some young people this is highly significant and occurs despite significant disruption in other aspects of their lives. Some young people go on to achieve GCSE's. One young person is rightly proud of achieving seven GCSE's recently. An education professional confirmed this stating, 'they have done extremely well...they are very proactive and motivated.' Professionals also comment positively about the support the home offers to young people in relation to their education. One professional stating, 'I can't say enough about the home...whenever there is an issue they deal with it... communication is good and there is good practical support.' A head teacher states, 'this has been easily the best home we have ever worked with...young people make progress'. The majority of young people also make good progress in relation to their self-confidence; as a result, they achieve more socially and are able to make friends. Staff help young people to express their views and to make complaints appropriately. This ensures that young people feel they are listened to. Most young people enjoy a wide range of positive activities and have developed a number of interests. Young people talk enthusiastically about this. For example, horse riding, cadets and taekwondo are amongst their current favourites. In addition, young people engage in community projects including theatre groups. Others have attended a university project and helped produce a book which has since been published. Young people also enjoy spending time with staff. One young person highlights that they work with staff in the garden, 'we grow herbs and strawberries and I have repainted the garden shed'. Young people are helped to prepare for their future, and develop practical skills to assist them to live more independently. Young people are proud of their skills and compete to see who makes the best pasta! Some young people have recently moved into and out of the home. Some of these moves were in challenging, emotional circumstances. These moves were sensitively supported by staff. Consequently, disruption for young people was kept to a minimum. One social	

worker highlights this explaining, 'the home were really good. They stepped in straight away and put a really robust transitions plan in place.' She added, 'the young person loves it.'

Young people feel that, 'the home is good and staff are good at supporting us'.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Risks are understood and well managed by staff. This includes incidents when young people are missing or are at risk of child sexual exploitation. The police and other agencies talk positively about this. One police officer explained that, 'when young people are missing the home go above and beyond.' This reinforces to young people that they are cared for and offers them a safer alternative to running away. A range of professionals highlight effective communication, staff awareness, and information sharing as key strengths of the home. As a direct result of this, agencies receive key pieces of intelligence and are able to take action to protect young people. This has been highly significant for some young people. Staff and managers also work effectively with parents to help develop their awareness of risk, including child sexual exploitation. In some circumstances, the home has supported families to move to safer areas. This has improved relationships between some young people and their families. One parent comments, 'the home were brilliant, they went above and beyond. They never gave up.' A social worker confirms this adding, 'the level of safeguarding provided was excellent and prevented a huge amount of missing episodes, as did the effective communication and collaborative working.' However, the home's records do not evidence or support the robust practice demonstrated by staff. Specifically, some risk assessments are poorly written. They are generic and do not assess whether each young person is at risk of harm or take into account information in other plans. In addition, they do not consistently outline the arrangements to reduce the risk of harm to young people. The impact of this is reduced by staff practice, which is markedly stronger. Allegations against staff are well managed and the registered manager ensures independent oversight from the Designated Officer in the Local Authority. Staff are safely recruited. The registered manager utilises a new system to ensure that all checks are in place before staff work in the home. This is a significant improvement and ensures that any adults employed are thoroughly vetted. These procedures protect young people. Young people are sensitively supported to manage relationships with each other. Bullying is taken seriously and action is taken by staff to reduce this. Young people	

talk positively about the support they receive in this regard.

Generally, challenging behaviour is well managed by staff who ensure consistent support to young people. Young people are involved in the development of plans to support them in difficult situations. This helps them to take increasing responsibility for their behaviour. Physical restraint is sometimes used in order to keep staff and young people safe. Records of these incidents lack key detail. Specifically, some records lack a description of the measure used and its duration. This limits the oversight managers have and the detail available to young people in the future.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires Improvement
The home is managed by a suitably experienced registered manager. He has been in post since January 2015 and is undertaking the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare. The registered manager is aware of the majority of the home's strengths and weaknesses and has recently implemented processes to improve monitoring further. Not all of these processes are fully embedded. As a result, oversight of a small number of key incidents has not been robust. Specifically the registered manager has not assessed whether staffing levels are always sufficient to provide care for each young person. This is particularly problematic at night when typically one member of staff will work alone in the home. This has the potential to affect young people who may not receive the supervision/support required should they wake at night. Reports produced by the home's independent person are poor. Key issues are not discussed and, as a result, they are unable to give an opinion as to whether young people are effectively safeguarded, and the conduct of the home promotes young people's well-being. Furthermore, reports do not effectively gauge the views of parents, young people, or staff. This reduces their opportunities to express their opinions and influence the running of the home. These shortfalls reduce the quality of the independent oversight available to the home. This impacts on the speed with which the service can improve. The home's statement of purpose accurately reflects the services offered to young people. It is reviewed and updated regularly. However, the version published on the home's website is significantly out dated and lacks key detail. This reduces the information available to professionals, families and young people.	

Staff receive good support from the home's management team. Supervisions are effective and staff talk positively about the support they receive. One member of staff citing, 'excellent support from both the registered manager and the assistant manager'. Another felt that managers were, 'really supportive and dedicated.' This ensures that staff have the skills to meet the needs of all young people.

The registered manager has developed excellent relationships with professionals from a wide range of agencies including, education, police, social care and health. He is committed to young people and offers robust challenge when the responses from other services are not effective. This helps young people to get the support they need.

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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