

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	06/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC458021
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	Joy Robinson
Inspector	Matt Hedges

Inspection date	06/01/2016
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 are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC458021

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- Managers do not always evaluate or manage risk effectively when young people are out of the home.
- Staff cannot consistently take effective action when young people leave the home.
- Communication with some key professionals is poor.
- Support to young people moving into or out of the home is variable.
- Monitoring and review systems are ineffective.
- Managers do not respond to all complaints appropriately.

The children's home strengths

- Young people have strong, supportive relationships with staff.
- Staff support most young people well with their education.
- Young people's health needs are well met.

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
<p>5. Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met</p> <p>In order to meet the engaging with the wider system standard, with particular reference to communication, the registered person must ensure that staff: -</p> <p>(a) seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care.</p>	19/02/2016
<p>12. The Protection of Children Standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to risk assessment and taking action, the registered provider must ensure that staff: -</p> <p>(2)(a)</p> <p>(i) 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</p> <p>(vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare.</p>	19/02/2016
<p>13. The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard with particular reference to monitoring and review systems the registered person must: -</p> <p>(2)(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	19/02/2016

<p>14. The care planning standard</p> <p>In order to meet the care planning standard, with particular reference to planning and admissions, the registered person must ensure that: -</p> <p>(2)(b)(i) arrangements are in place to ensure the effective induction of each child into the home.</p>	19/02/2016
<p>The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))</p>	19/02/2016
<p>The registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (2) (c))</p>	19/02/2016

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two young people with emotional/behavioural needs. The home is operated by a Local Authority. It only accommodates young people from this area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/03/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/12/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
26/02/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
19/06/2013	CH - Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
<p>Staff develop positive, supportive relationships with young people. A young person confirms this stating, 'my carers are really really good'. Despite this, some young people spend a significant amount of time away from the home in the local community or with friends. This impacts on the quality of their day-to-day experiences and has resulted in several significant safeguarding issues, ultimately resulting in a young person moving from the home. This affected their feelings of security and well-being, however staff made significant efforts to ensure this move was well planned.</p> <p>Several other young people have moved into and out of the home since the last inspection. For some, this move was well supported. For others, assessments have lacked key information. An impact assessment (completed before young people move to the home) is incomplete and in one section refers to another young person from another home. Consequently, the registered manager failed to consult all key professionals, as required by the home's policy. For example, an Independent Reviewing Officer was unaware that the young person had moved until several weeks afterwards. This limits the information available to staff and impacts on the effectiveness of young people's induction into the home.</p> <p>Young people receive individualised care. Staff consult young people about the care they receive and their views are generally taken into account. In contrast, the systems in place for managing formal complaints are of variable quality. Some complaints are well considered and responded to appropriately. Others are not recognised as complaints and go largely unaddressed. This has the potential to limit the support available to young people, or others, should they wish to raise concerns.</p> <p>Most young people make steady progress in their education. Their attendance is good. Some young people stay late at school and attend extra classes to prepare for exams. Staff help them through effective relationships with education colleagues. A teacher confirms this stating, 'staff are really supportive...we are all on the same page'. Another highlights, 'working with the home has been fantastic since the registered manager took over...communication is really good.' Young people achieve more because of this.</p> <p>Staff ensure that young people's health needs are well met. A health professional comments that staff are, 'proactive and timely at dealing with the health needs of the young people, this includes being spot on with health promotion and accessing</p>	

appropriate health services.’ As a result, young people have lifestyles that are more active. For example, a young person has recently started going to the gym. This is a significant step for them and is an indicator of their increasing self-confidence. Staff also assist young people to develop practical independence skills. This helps to prepare them for adult-life.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
<p>Managers do not consistently identify, understand or manage risky situations effectively. This particularly relates to times when young people are away from the home. Risk assessments do not take account of all relevant information. They do not make effective arrangements to reduce risk when young people go to see friends, or leave the home and go missing. This includes young people who may be at risk of child sexual exploitation. Staff are not always able to follow young people or search for them. This means that staff are prevented from taking effective action when there are concerns about young people’s welfare. Despite this, missing incidents decrease.</p> <p>Managers have taken steps to begin to address these shortfalls. They have also ensured that records of missing incidents have improved and detail the circumstances of the young person’s return. This was in response to the one shortfall raised at the home’s last inspection.</p> <p>Staff ensure that clear and consistent boundaries are in place when young people struggle with their behaviour. They also show good awareness of how to help young people who may self-harm. Young people are clear they feel safe in the home and understand why certain boundaries are in place.</p> <p>Staff work with mental health professionals and young people to develop ‘safety plans’. These outline clear actions to take when young people are distressed and are shared with education providers to ensure a consistent response. As a result, young people are safer. A number of professionals talk positively about the home in this regard. A social care professional stating, ‘staff are great at defusing and managing behaviour’. A police officer also comments, ‘I wish all homes were as good as this one.’ In contrast, significant incidents are not always shared with young people’s Independent Reviewing Officers. This contradicts the home’s policies.</p>	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
<p>The home has an experienced and suitably qualified manager. She was registered in May 2015 but is currently away from the home. The assistant manager has taken on additional responsibilities, supported by senior managers within the organisation. This has reduced the impact on young people and staff. It also ensures that the home can continue to achieve the overall aims and objectives set out in its statement of purpose.</p> <p>The majority of the monitoring and review systems are ineffectual. They do not identify strengths and weaknesses and consequently do not ensure continuous improvement. Formal 'quality of care reviews' are completed every six months. They do not identify, monitor, review or evaluate any actions that are required to improve the quality of care provided for young people. This affects the understanding managers and staff have about young people's progress and their ability to prioritise specific needs. In contrast, senior managers have recruited a new independent visitor. This has improved the quality of their visits and subsequent reports significantly. This ensures better independent oversight of the home.</p> <p>Staff are well trained. They receive regular supervision and comment positively about the support they receive from managers. Recent changes mean that team meetings are more focused. Senior managers within the organisation have also commissioned a bespoke therapeutic service to offer consultation and advice to the staff team. This is starting to have a positive impact. It improves the guidance available to staff and their understanding of young people's needs. This results in improved support to young people.</p> <p>Managers and staff develop good relationships with young people's families - when it is appropriate and safe to do so. They will advocate for young people and challenge families, and other professionals, appropriately when they do not act in young people's best interests. This helps ensure that young people receive the support they need.</p>	

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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