

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	23/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC458021
Type of inspection	Interim
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	Post Vacant
Inspector	Matt Hedges

Inspection date	23/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
<p>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</p> <p>This home was judged requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>The registered manager has recently left the home, leaving her post vacant. Senior managers are taking action to address this vacancy. Interim management arrangements are effective. The home's experienced assistant manager is 'acting up' supported by an assistant manager from another part of the service. The management team are enthusiastic and focused on the needs of young people.</p> <p>The acting manager has implemented new monitoring systems. These are more effective and have helped him identify the home's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, he has met all of the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection. This has resulted in improved partnership working with other agencies and better assessment of risk. Visits by the home's independent person are also more effective and the reports produced are of a good quality. However, there is often a significant delay before the home receives the report. This does not allow the acting manager to make best use of the information provided.</p> <p>One young person has very recently moved into the home. This move happened quickly. Despite this, staff ensured she was well supported. The young person's social worker confirms this highlighting, 'the staff and the acting manager have been great.' This helps young people to feel settled and welcome at a time of great anxiety.</p> <p>Young people are generally positive about the support they receive and their relationships with core staff. These relationships help young people to make good progress. For example, one young person continues to make good progress in her education, despite facing a number of personal challenges. Her behaviour is more settled and she continues to entertain with her great sense of humour! However, on some occasions, the acting manager has had to use staff from other homes to provide cover. These staff do not always know young people as well. This does not provide continuity for young people, who rightly voice their concerns in this regard. Senior managers in the organisation are aware of this shortfall.</p> <p>Young people are actively encouraged to express their views, and do so effectively.</p>	

However, they do not have access to the 'young people's guide'. In addition, the acting manager has failed to review this guide or keep it up to date. This limits young people's access to important information.

Overall, the interior of the home is suitably furnished. Young people are encouraged to personalise their rooms, and help each other to decorate – with good results. In contrast, staff fail to maintain some outside areas adequately. This specifically relates to the front garden, where rubbish is clearly visible. This detracts from the otherwise homely and nurturing feel of the home.

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two young people with emotional/behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/01/2016	CH - Full	Requires improvement
24/03/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/12/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
26/02/2014	CH - Interim	Good progress

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>7. The children's views, wishes and feelings standard</p> <p>In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard, with particular reference to the children's guide, the registered person must ensure: -</p> <p>(2)(b)(ii) that each child has access to the home's children's guide, when the child's placement in the home is agreed and throughout the child's stay in the home</p> <p>(2)(c) that the children's guide is kept under review and children's comments are sought before revising this document.</p>	22/04/2016
<p>13. The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to staffing, the registered person must ensure: -</p> <p>(2)(e) that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child.</p>	22/04/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure that (in order for the home to be a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children), the environment is homely. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Ensure that the registered person actively seeks independent scrutiny of the home and makes best use of information from independent monitoring (including under regulation 44). (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 55, paragraph 10.24)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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