

SC458021

Registered provider: Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by the local authority and offers care and accommodation for two young people who have experienced childhood instability leading to trauma and/or associated complex behaviours. The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2018.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 May 2019

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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.

Date of last inspection: 26 June 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 26/06/2018 | Full | Good |
| 05/09/2017 | Full | Good |
| 02/02/2017 | Interim | Declined in effectiveness |
| 26/10/2016 | Full | Good |

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 |
|--|------------|
| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(vii)(c)(i)(ii))</p> | 14/07/2019 |
| <p>The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that staff— regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. <p>(Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(iv))</p> | 14/07/2019 |
| <p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that staff— help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of | 14/07/2019 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| <p>exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; and help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(viii)(ix)(x))</p> | |
| <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(iv)(viii)(b))</p> | 14/07/2019 |
| <p>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— help each child to understand how to keep safe; and understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(ii)(v))</p> | 14/07/2019 |
| <p>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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b))</p> | 14/07/2019 |

Recommendations

- In a restraint situation, staff should use their professional judgement, supported by their knowledge of each child's risk assessment, an understanding of the needs of the child (as set out in their relevant plans) and an understanding of the risks the child faces. Professional judgements may need to be taken quickly, and staff training and supervision of practice should support this. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 48, paragraph 9.53)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

One young person is due to leave the placement to move on to another home within the authority. It is hoped that this move will allow her space to study for her GCSEs. The home is to run as a single occupancy home, with the current young person remaining in place.

The home's environment has not been maintained to a good standard by the manager or the staff team. Young people have caused damage to the home. This damage has not been quickly repaired. This has left parts of the home in a less than suitable condition and has an undesirable impact on the young people. Some young people made negative comments on the condition of the home during their conversations with the inspectors.

Young people also told the inspectors that the home runs out of food before the end of the week, which impacts on what meal choices they have before shopping is carried out again.

Young people attend a variety of educational settings, dependent on their needs and abilities. Some young people maintain good school attendance. However, other young people lack motivation to attend or maintain their education placements despite staff encouragement and support. Because of this, some young people have not made good academic progress.

The views and opinions of young people are not regularly sought on aspects of the home, such as menu planning and activities. Therefore, young people's views do not significantly influence the running of the home.

Young people have clear health plans and are registered with the relevant primary healthcare services. Staff work hard to address issues that may compromise their health. For example, staff help young people to stop smoking and teach young people about the dangers of substance misuse.

Young people have clear care plans in place to ensure that they retain positive links with family members and friends. Staff support these arrangements both practically as well as providing emotional support to young people. Family and friends are welcome at the home. The staff regard it as key that young people maintain meaningful relationships with those important to them as this is part of their individual identity.

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

The home has been unsettled and some young people's behaviour has at times been extremely challenging. This has affected the ability of the staff to help some young

people to make meaningful attachments and to positively engage with the home's routines. Minor situations easily escalate. Incidents quickly heighten and destructive behaviour places young people and staff at risk. This has resulted in the police becoming increasingly involved at the home.

The risks associated with individual young people are understood and appropriate risk assessments and risk management strategies are in place. However, young people continue to place themselves at risk. Therefore, the strategies to reduce risk are not always effective. This means that young people's welfare and safety are not being promoted.

All incidents are evaluated by the manager, and reflective discussion takes place with staff and young people to inform future practice. However, there have been occasions when young people have posed serious threats to staff. Staff have not used their professional judgement and have intervened, risking potential injury to themselves and the young person.

There has been an increase in the number of missing from care episodes since the last inspection. Staff work closely with social workers, the police and other agencies to make sure that protocols and procedures are followed. There is always a return interview completed by an independent person and strategy meetings are held, so that all learning can be shared.

Staff are trained in fire safety procedures and they make sure that young people take part in fire evacuation drills, so that they understand how to leave the home safely in an emergency.

The system for the recruitment and selection of staff is thorough and ensures that all staff are appropriately checked to look after vulnerable young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Staff have the necessary qualifications and skills to fulfil their roles. There is a training matrix in place to ensure that staff training is up to date and current. All staff are qualified or working towards their level 3 diploma in residential childcare. This ensures that staff keep their skills and knowledge up to date and are competent in looking after young people.

Team meetings take place regularly, which give staff the opportunity to reflect on their practice and to help to develop their skills and abilities. The authority's therapists attend team meetings to provide clinical oversight of the young people. The manager and staff confirm that they receive formal supervision and have their performance regularly appraised.

The manager ensures that good working relationships exist with other professionals such as the police, education providers and social workers. Because of this, young people receive a team approach from the professionals around them.

In response to the two requirements made at the last inspection, the home's environment has seen further damage caused and as a result this requirement is being repeated. The use of sanctions in the home is now more proportionate between the young people.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC458021

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: City of Stoke-on-Trent, Civic Centre, Glebe Street,
Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 1HH

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Stacey Hegarty

Inspectors

Dave Carrigan: social care inspector

Jo Warburton: social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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