

2501566

Registered provider: Vitality Care Residential Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A small private provider owns this home. The home offers residential placements for up to three children who have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager is registered with Ofsted, and they are experienced and suitably qualified.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers outstanding

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/06/2021	Full	Good
04/03/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
05/11/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, two children who lived in the home for several years have moved on from the home in a planned way. Highly committed staff and managers supported the two children well and ensured that they were equipped with appropriate life skills. Excellent communication with children and an adult social worker by managers ensured that when children were ready to move on, they had the relevant support they needed as part of their moving-on care plans.

Children have trusted relationships with staff. One child living in the home has developed secure and positive relationships with staff, which is something they had previously struggled with. Staff offer individualised and nurturing care. When children move on from the home, they maintain contact with managers and staff, reflecting the strong relationships children develop with them.

Children attend education daily. A child who previously struggled with attending school now attends every day. Managers have actively advocated on behalf of children to ensure that they have the right support in place at school, making sure that children are supported to achieve their educational potential. A teacher and the virtual school lead told the inspector that managers have high educational aspirations for children and will challenge them when things for the children are not in place, and they wish all managers of children's homes advocated for children in the same way.

Staff and managers ensure that children's health needs are met well. Managers recognise when children may need external support to help them express their feelings. Subsequently, managers have put in place an independent art psychotherapist who undertakes weekly art therapy with children. This has helped the child who lives in the home to regulate their feelings and emotions better.

Children's written plans are informed by research and through consultation with a clinical psychologist. Staff have regular discussions with the psychologist to help them understand children's experiences and offer therapeutic care to them. This helps to ensure that children receive care that is individual to their needs and experiences and helps them settle into the home and make progress.

Staff support children to have positive time with people who are important to them. This helps children to maintain positive relationships with their parents and siblings.

Children are provided with opportunities to share their views. This includes regular meetings with staff and a 'listen up' scheme, which children use regularly to make requests. In addition, when children make complaints, which is not very often, the manager responds promptly. Children are listened to and feel valued.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff and managers provide an effective response to children when they go missing from home. Staff follow jointly agreed missing-from-care protocols by looking for children and ensuring that all relevant information is shared with professionals, such as the police. This enables everyone to work together to locate children and return them safely home. When children return, managers and staff work with children to understand why they go missing from home to try and prevent further incidents from occurring.

Staff and managers have a good understanding of risks associated with child exploitation. For one child, when there were concerns about their high vulnerability to being exploited, staff and managers worked very closely with partner agencies to reduce risks related to this. In addition, staff worked well with the child to help them to learn skills to keep themselves safe when they were out in the community.

Staff promote positive behaviours through rewards. When children struggle to regulate their behaviours and emotions, staff complete restorative work with children to help them build skills, such as empathy. This helps children to reflect on their actions and think about other, more positive ways to manage their feelings. As a result, children are involved in fewer incidents of challenging behaviours.

The manager has completed a thorough and detailed assessment of the location of the home. This is reviewed regularly. The manager liaises with other agencies, such as the police, and updates the assessment with any new information. This ensures that the location risk assessment remains relevant and up to date and keeps staff and children informed about their local area.

Trained and skilled staff only use physical intervention as a last resort to keep children safe. Staff have an excellent understanding of children's triggers and use de-escalation strategies that are individualised in line with children's assessments and plans. The staff reflections following an intervention are undertaken by a clinical psychologist, who explores therapeutic-based reflection with staff to help their learning. However, on two occasions when the manager was involved in the physical intervention, they then reviewed the incident themselves. This does not provide independent oversight and scrutiny of the incident.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Managers are inspirational and ambitious for children. They have high expectations of staff and have created a nurturing and positive culture in the home. They are always looking for innovative ways to provide excellent care to children. For example, they use a traffic light system to help a child who is a visual learner to regulate the time they spend on the computer. Managers have also invested in external services to provide staff with expert guidance and training, and they have revised children's plans to ensure they are research- and trauma-informed.

Staff enjoy working in the home and were keen to share their feedback with the inspector. Staff explained that the environment they work in is extremely supportive, they are provided with good learning opportunities and new staff are supported to learn and develop their role.

Managers and staff have built excellent relations with partner agencies, ensuring that they work well together to offer individualised care and support to children. Professionals such as a teacher, a children's social worker and the virtual school lead provided their feedback to the inspector, and they described managers as fantastic ambassadors and advocates for children, ensuring they all work together to achieve the best outcomes for children.

Managers value the importance of high-quality training. Staff have completed mandatory training courses as well as training that is specific to children's needs, such as training in autism spectrum disorder. In addition, staff receive training from a clinical psychologist to help them implement care that is therapeutic and trauma-informed. For example, they have received training in dysregulation strategies, understanding children's neurological conditions and how children process information differently. This ensures that staff have a high-level skills and knowledge base to provide excellent care and support to children.

Staff receive reflective supervision sessions. These provide staff with additional opportunities to share how their training and practice have helped children make progress.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

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'.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that if the manager is involved in an incident involving the physical intervention of a child, then this incident is reviewed by someone independent. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

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: 2501566

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Vitality Care Residential Limited

Registered provider address: 6 Central Avenue, Stoke-on-Trent ST2 9AR

Responsible individual: Alison Fitchford-Raji

Registered manager: Steven Brentnall

Inspector

Shazana Jamal, Social Care Inspector

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