

1232650

Registered provider: Friends Together Care Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a private provider. It provides care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2020.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living in this home. Both children were spoken to during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 August 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/08/2023	Full	Good
03/10/2022	Full	Good
12/10/2021	Full	Good
21/01/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are welcomed to the home through a planned admission process that includes being provided with information, meeting staff, visiting the home, and being consulted about how they feel prior to moving in. Impact risk assessments are carried out which are robust and consider the impact on staff and children currently living in the home as well as the child moving in.

For children moving into the home, risk assessments include all relevant information, and are analysed against the needs of children currently living at the home.

Staff ensure they take the time to get to know children and understand their needs. They also take the time to help children explore their feelings, which enables children to identify a trusted staff member they could speak to or relate to. Children understand that they live at the home and appear settled even when living there for a short period of time. All children were observed to have meaningful interactions with staff and reported being happy living in the home.

The location risk assessment is regularly reviewed and includes the views of external professionals. The risks children were vulnerable to are now appropriately assessed and plans are in place to reduce the likelihood of risk. Feedback from professionals confirmed that these assessments were thorough and centred around the children.

Children have access to education. Where children have not fully engaged in their learning, staff and management communicate with schools and seek alternative provision. Staff support children to continue to attend education settings where they are comfortable and have supported a child to achieve their GCSEs despite speaking English as an additional language.

Children in the home are offered activities either in-house or out of the home which reflect their interests or offer a new experience to children. Children are offered the opportunity to engage in activities linked to their religious faith.

Children are generally in good health and have positive routines. They are supported to eat healthily and stay active. All children have access to relevant health settings and staff support attendance at appointments.

The complaints process is clearly outlined in policy and in the children's guide, and children understand how to make a formal complaint. One child has been supported to make a complaint about missing an appointment due to miscommunication and had felt confident to do this without fear of reprisal.

Children have their independence promoted and are supported to understand the decision-making in relation to their care. Staff seek consent to care and explore

children's points of view through conversations.

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

Children say feel safe living at the home. Risks to children are assessed and risk documentation clearly identifies actions staff should take to minimise the likelihood of risks occurring. When risks do occur, staff are guided by assessments to know how to respond effectively to keep children safe.

Staff respond with a robust and consistent approach when children go missing. Staff actively look for children and their responses are guided by children's individual plans. When it is necessary for staff to search children's rooms, they ensure children are aware and document the reason for this. The manager reviews episodes of going missing and addresses and develops staff practice in managing these incidents effectively.

Positive behaviour is promoted by staff, who are skilled at de-escalation, and restraint is only used as a last resort. This approach is effective as physical intervention is rarely used even when children present with abusive and aggressive behaviour. Staff offer children the opportunity to speak about any incidents and explore their views through reflective debriefs.

There are robust processes to ensure that health and safety is upheld. The manager ensures environmental risks are regularly assessed and equipment is serviced and maintained. Staff have undergone appropriate safer recruitment checks to ensure that staff supporting the children are appropriate to do so.

The behaviour management policy states that consequences to children's behaviour should be restorative in nature. However, consequences have been given inconsistently, with most consequences aiming to educate children about the effects of their behaviour. Consequences are repeated until a behaviour stops, but their effectiveness has not been evaluated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home benefits from a qualified and experienced registered manager who is supported by a leadership and management team who share a vision for the children and the home.

Staff spoke positively about the leaders and managers team. Staff comments about the manager included: 'The manager is so supportive, and she puts the young people at the forefront of everything she does,' and 'The best manager that I have ever had. She is supportive and is approachable to discuss work and personal issues with and it's all confidential.' Staff also told the inspectors that the director is very supportive and always puts staff first.

Children are cared for by a consistent and experienced staff team who can meet the needs of the children. Staff are appropriately qualified, and the manager explores their professional development through supervision and appraisal. Appropriate training opportunities to achieve qualifications are identified. When agency staff are used, the manager attempts to keep these consistent and appropriate vetting and induction take place.

Managers and staff receive regular supervision that focuses on children's progress. All supervision is recorded effectively and includes reflective discussions and challenges to staff as required to ensure they are knowledgeable and meeting the expected standards in providing care to children.

Leaders and managers value external scrutiny, and while they have appointed a new independent person to visit the home on a monthly basis, the reports still do not include an assessment of how children are safeguarded, and their well-being promoted. The manager has recognised that the independent visitor reports could benefit from more constructive feedback to drive continuous improvement but has not yet addressed this with the independent visitor.

The statement of purpose captures the ethos of the home, but does not detail how a person, body or organisation that is involved in the care or protection of a child can access the home's child protection policies or the behaviour management policy.

The manager has escalated children's risks to external agencies but has not consistently challenged these agencies when they are not involved in decisions regarding the risks to children. Despite the manager appropriately raising concerns, she has not been invited to multi-agency meetings or been involved in decision-making for the child, which has reduced her ability to advocate for the child. This had been challenged by the manager for some children but not as effectively for others.

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, The 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
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the 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. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1)(4)(a)(b) (5)) This requirement is restated.	26 February 2025
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16 (1)) In particular, the statement of purpose should include details of how a person, body or organisation involved in the care or protection of a child can access the home's child protection policies or the behaviour management policy.	26 February 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should, ensure that where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, the staff

at the home should challenge them to meet the child's needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)

- The registered person should ensure that children who wish to keep and take their own medication should be supported to, if they are able to do so safely. Staff should be mindful that children holding their own prescribed medication must only use it for themselves in accordance with the prescription. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.16)
- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

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: 1232650

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Friends Together Care Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: 7 Tenter Lane, Warmsworth, Doncaster, Yorkshire DN4 9PP

Responsible individual: Thomas Worthington

Registered manager: Christine Cracknell

Inspectors

Vikki Thwaites, Social Care Inspector

Lisa Finch, Social Care Inspector

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