

1254837

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed under trust arrangements. The home provides care for up to six children who may have emotional and social difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2019.

Six children were living in the home at the time of the inspection. The inspectors spoke to three of the children during this inspection.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 September 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: 9 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/08/2023	Full	Good
24/01/2023	Full	Good
08/06/2021	Full	Good
14/01/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive good-quality care in this home. Staff place children at the centre of their practice to ensure that their day-to-day needs are met. They are committed and passionate about caring for children and helping them to make good progress.

Children have developed positive and trusting relationships with staff. Some of the children have lived in the home for a number of years and have described it as their family home. When children move out of the home, staff ensure that children experience a positive farewell to celebrate their time in the home. Positive endings help children with the next period of their lives. The managers and staff ensure a sensitive welcome for children. Children are welcome to visit the home and meet the staff before they move in, which helps them to settle in quickly.

Children's education outcomes are varied. Staff understand and help children overcome barriers to accessing education and training. Staff actively encourage children to explore their interests and achieve their goals. For older children, staff help them to actively look for employment opportunities. This increases the children's life chances.

Staff help children to make informed decisions about their health needs. Staff educate children to help them understand the risks of smoking and substance misuse. However, the effects of such work have not yet come to fruition, as some children continue to smoke and misuse substances and do not always attend their health appointments.

Children have the opportunity to try new things and visit new places. Staff support children to pursue activities that interest them, such as attending holidays away from home and visiting places of interest. Children are given choices every day about what they want to do, and their views and wishes are consistently sought. Staff create memory books filled with photos of the children doing things that they enjoy. The memory books help the children to remember the fun times that they have shared with staff and other children. This also provides children with a keepsake for when they leave the home.

Staff help children develop skills for becoming more independent and prepare them for adult life. Staff help children to learn how to cook, budget for shopping and do their own laundry. This support helps children learn and develop important life skills, as well as plan for the future.

The home is decorated and furnished to a high standard throughout. There is plenty of space for children to play and relax, together or individually. There are photos of the children around the home and plenty of games that interest them. Children's bedrooms are decorated to reflect their individual choices.

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

Staff and managers understand the risks to children and know what each child's needs are. Care plans and risk assessments are kept up to date and include effective plans to mitigate risks. Staff and managers work closely with other agencies and family members to ensure that appropriate action is taken to keep children safe.

Key-work sessions focus on children's individual needs and are consistent with their plans. Formal and informal discussions are used to ensure that the sessions are relevant to the child and what is happening in their lives. Staff use information about children and educational tools to plan effective key-work sessions. Positive relationships between staff and children allow key-work sessions to be meaningful and beneficial for children.

Some children are at risk of criminal exploitation, and missing-from-home incidents are high for those children. When children go missing from home, staff follow the agreed safety plans and look for them in the local area and the places they may go. Staff try to contact the children and their families and friends and report the incident to the police at the earliest opportunity. When children return home, staff ensure the children are given supportive and appropriate debriefs, and any triggers for going missing are considered and tracked to avoid repeat incidents. The managers attend and contribute to multi-agency safeguarding forums to ensure that there is a collective approach to supporting the children.

Staff hold children as a last resort to keep everyone safe. Staff keep professionals and families informed following any incidents. The manager reviews all incidents and has discussions with staff and children to reflect on them. This helps to ensure safe practice around the use of holds and allows staff to consider how to improve their approach to supporting children.

Safeguarding concerns are responded to quickly, and subsequent investigations are thorough and involve all the relevant safeguarding agencies. However, the manager has not notified Ofsted of one serious incident. This oversight has prevented Ofsted from scrutinising how significant incidents and potential safeguarding matters are investigated and managed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed effectively by a permanent and suitably experienced registered manager, who is supported by an effective deputy manager. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of children's needs and the progress that they are making. They show compassion and warmth to the children in their care.

The managers have good oversight of the home and the quality of care provided to the children. The managers use a variety of monitoring processes to scrutinise and raise the standard of care that the children receive.

All staff have completed the local authority's mandatory training. The managers have a good understanding of the staff's strengths and areas for improvement. Staff said that they are well supported by the management team.

Staff have regular reflective supervision that they use to discuss the children's current needs. Team meetings are regular and generally well attended. This provides staff with time to reflect on their practice individually and collectively, as well as support their ongoing development.

The manager works hard to develop and maintain appropriate relationships with children's families and professionals involved in their care. Professionals and parents report good communication with the staff team and high standards of care, both of which contribute to the progress children are making.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

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: 1254837

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland Limited

Registered provider address: City Hall Floor 2, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA

Responsible individual: Sharon Willis

Registered manager: Barry Hall

Inspectors

Cherie Chen, Social Care Inspector

Lisa Finch, Social Care Inspector

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