

1254837

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to six children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a limited company.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 January 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **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 provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 22 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Two compliance notices were issued on 30 November 2017 in relation to regulation 12, the protection of children standard, and regulation 13, the leadership and management standard. The compliance notices are judged to be met.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The management team and the staff have worked hard to address the issues in the compliance notices and improved overall effectiveness within a short period of time. This is despite lower staffing levels due to sickness. The remaining staff have demonstrated great resilience during this time, and this has protected the young people from any adverse impact.
- There are positive working relationships with other agencies, including health and education services. This ensures that young people receive individualised care.
- Since the last inspection, the number of missing from home episodes has been significantly reduced. Young people are spending more time at the home and have engaged in structured activities, including trips to the cinema.
- The staff team is receiving ongoing training around the use of physical interventions and how to record information accurately.
- The risk assessments for young people have significantly improved and they are relevant to each young person's needs. There are clear strategies to manage behaviours in order to reduce risk.
- There is a clear plan for all staff to access ongoing training on trauma and attachment. Opportunities for learning and reflection would help the staff to understand the complex needs of the young people and employ appropriate responses.
- The manager's monitoring of practice within the home has improved. She has developed a plan to ensure that this is kept under continual review.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The records at the home are not always clear and do not follow guidelines.
- The manager needs to further develop monitoring of practice at the home to ensure that the improved effectiveness is sustained.
- The views, wishes and feelings of young people are not always evidenced in the records. This would ensure that young people remain the focus of daily practice.
- Safeguarding should be a standard item agenda in supervisions. Safeguarding should be explicitly referred to as a topic of discussion. This would create a strong safeguarding culture at the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/11/2017	Full	Inadequate

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
Purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— - 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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— - provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; - help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; (Regulation 6(1)(2)(iv)(vi))	26/02/2018
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— - 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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— - help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child. (Regulation 7(1)(2)(a)(iii))	26/02/2018
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—	12/03/2018

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— understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11(1)(2)(ix))	
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— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(iii)(v))	26/02/2018
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(2)(f)(h))	12/03/2018

Recommendations

- Supervision of staff practice should ensure that individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home so they understand what they would need to do if they found other staff misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of a child. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations

including the quality standards' page 43, paragraph 9.14).

In particular, safeguarding should be a standard item agenda in supervisions. Safeguarding should be explicitly referred to as a topic that has been discussed. Additionally, reflection of practice and the timings of supervision should be included.

- Regulations 35-39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. Case records must be kept up-to-date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The manager and the staff team have worked hard to address the compliance notices issued following the last inspection in relation to the protection and promotion of young people's welfare. There is evidence of improved practice, specifically relating to risk management and care planning practice. This means that young people are provided with a good standard of care.

Morale levels have been low among staff following the previous inspection. Additionally, there has been sickness and compassionate leave. Despite this, the staff team has shown great resilience in driving improvements forward and delivering good outcomes for young people.

Case files at this home are held electronically. This means that it is difficult for young people to access and contribute to their own records. During this inspection there was evidence that the staff team has undertaken one-to-one sessions with young people to ensure that they are aware of how to access and contribute to records. However, gaining the wishes and feelings of young people could be developed further. For example, the young people's comments in one-to-one sessions are not consistently recorded or discussed more broadly at team meetings. This would develop good practice at the home to ensure that young people are at the centre of daily practice.

The relationships between the young people and the staff team are good, and young people enjoy spending time with staff. One young person said: 'I much prefer it when we do stuff like when we went to the pictures on New Year's and then ordered a take-

away; it was great.' Planned activities provide opportunities for young people to positively contribute to decision-making and experience a range of interests. During the inspection, the atmosphere at the home was calm and there have been fewer incidents of damage caused to the home.

To enhance the staff team's knowledge around the impact of trauma, a psychologist is assisting the team to develop broader ways of thinking to support the young people. The staff are beginning to use this resource on a consultation basis to improve practice. Feedback from the psychologist is positive.

The young people are making good progress in relation to their health, education and emotional, social and psychological well-being. One young person, who was not engaging in education at the last inspection, recently achieved 100% attendance at school. Another young person has also re-engaged in education. This is significant progress for these young people. Another young person has engaged well with therapeutic support. This has helped to reduce harmful behaviours.

One young person is experiencing a difficult time due to personal circumstances. The staff team is being proactive to support this young person through a sensitive and difficult period. The young person has taken the time to write a formal compliment to the manager, which states that the staff 'Have an admirable dedication to their job.'

There are inconsistencies in the recording of information among the staff team. This can range from the language used in records to records not being kept up to date. Not all entries are signed and dated by the author. This means that young people do not always receive consistent care, as information is missing and there is no way of tracking accountability.

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

The practice of monitoring safeguarding concerns and related records at the home was ineffective at the last inspection. There is some evidence of improved effectiveness. A social worker commented, 'The staff follow protocol. They have recently shared information that led to quick action being taken, and resolved a safeguarding matter very quickly.' Other social workers have also commented on the level of communication from the staff being good.

Risk assessments have significantly improved and are individualised to meet each young person's needs. This enables the staff team to respond to the young people with effective strategies to mitigate risk. There are now clear strategies in place to engage young people in an encouraging way. Since the last inspection, missing from home episodes have been significantly reduced. Restraints have not been used since October 2017, which is a considerable improvement.

Risks around social media were identified for some young people during the last inspection. During this inspection, there is evidence of one-to-one work having been

undertaken with young people around the risks in the digital world.

The staff team has recently completed updated safeguarding training, among other training relevant to their daily roles. The training on trauma and attachment is in its early stages. There are arrangements in place for it to progress. The effectiveness of learning is yet to be evidenced by the home's daily practice.

Staff have received supervision, and safeguarding is an agenda item. Not all supervision records refer explicitly to safeguarding. This would strengthen the home's culture regarding its safeguarding practice.

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

The registered manager is experienced and appropriately qualified for the position held. She is supported in her role by a motivated and well-established team. The previous inspection identified that the monitoring of practice at the home was ineffective in driving improvements forward. This inspection has found that the manager has put plans in place to address the shortfalls, but has not yet sustained good progress.

Good leadership qualities, including challenging practice and recording information, are the areas for the manager to develop. The staff team would benefit from further training to ensure that records are consistent, accurate and within legal guidelines.

To meet the expectation of good, managers and leaders must lead confidently and by example. One member of staff said: 'We need direction to guide us, by the managers; we want to be good. I think we are now heading in that direction.'

The manager has complied with the compliance notices in a timely manner. This has been with the support of a hardworking and dedicated team. She accepts the home's weaknesses and plans to effect change to improve practice.

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 difference 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: 1254837

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland Limited

Registered provider address: City of Sunderland, PO Box 102, Sunderland SR2 7DN

Responsible individual: Debra Patterson

Registered manager: Suzanne Metcalfe

Inspector:

Jacqueline Tate, social care inspector

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