

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 young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a limited company.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 June 2018

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: 2 May 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

There were three compliance notices issued following the interim inspection. All three have been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/05/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
15/01/2018	Full	Good
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
The quality and 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— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; 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 understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v))	20/07/2018
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers. (Regulation 8(2)(iii))	20/07/2018
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; and	20/07/2018

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— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; and 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(2)(a)(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 the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(b))	20/07/2018
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (e))	20/07/2018
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. (Regulation 14(1)(a))	20/07/2018

Recommendations

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- Regulation 19(2) details sanctions that are prohibited in behaviour management. Any sanctions 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. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- 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: requires improvement to be good

Within the short space of time since the interim inspection, the home has made some progress to address the compliance notices issued. Further progress is necessary for this home to be judged as good. This is because the experiences of young people in this home continue to be mixed.

Educational attendance and attainment has not seen any improvement, and this remains an outstanding requirement. There are no proactive strategies currently in place for when young people refuse to attend their educational provision. Such strategies would help to reintegrate young people back into education.

The young people are happy living at the home. New incentive schemes have led to one young person being rewarded with a flat screen television for his room, which was his choice of reward. Activities are offered regularly. They enhance the experiences of young people as well as supporting and building positive relationships with the adults that care for them.

The home has reviewed what sanctions should apply to individual young people according to the level of risk their behaviour poses. However, records show that some sanctions read as ambiguous and contradictory. Additionally, sanctions are inconsistently applied. This gives mixed messages to young people.

Key-worker sessions are carried out and recorded. In the main, they are reactive and are not fully supported by individual placement plans. Additionally, there is an inconsistency in young people's views and comments being recorded. The use of language in recordings is not always helpful for young people. This remains an area of development for the home.

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

When young people are missing from the home, protocols are followed. However, missing from home episodes have significantly increased in the past few months. There are reactive strategies in place for staff to respond to missing episodes, including phone top-ups to stay in communication with young people. The staff team is developing more proactive ways to disrupt behaviours, but these are not yet fully detailed within risk assessments. Additionally, risk assessments are not promptly updated following missing from home episodes.

Physical intervention is rarely used. There has been one physical intervention since the last full inspection in January 2018. A senior member of staff is now trained to deliver 'Therapeutic Crisis Intervention', which is the home's crisis prevention and intervention model.

Part of the home's development plan is to work with a consultant psychologist to understand how trauma and a lack of attachment affects young people. This will strengthen safeguarding practice in the home, as it will promote therapeutic responses to help and protect young people. The effectiveness is not yet known as it is still to be embedded in practice.

The home has improved its safeguarding culture. Safeguarding is added as a stand-alone agenda item in team meetings and individual supervisions.

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

The registered manager is appropriately qualified and experienced for the position held. She has managed the home since September 2013. Staffing issues are an ongoing concern. The registered manager has had a period of sickness absence and team members also remain absent. Despite staff morale being low, the staff team remains positive that it can effect positive change and improve practice in the home.

The registered manager has taken reasonable steps to meet the requirements in the compliance notices. There is a plan in place to drive improvements forward. Systems are in place to address shortfalls in practice. The effectiveness of implementing strategies is not yet known given the short period of time that has elapsed since the interim inspection.

The registered manager lacks lustre in her leadership skills. She has not provided consistent and clear guidance to the staff team. Some improvements have been made

and include additional training, peer audits, reflective team meetings and improvements to staff supervisions.

External monitoring has improved. The independent visitor attends monthly and has set out clear recommendations that the registered manager has begun to address. This includes improving young people's case files to reflect individual needs and risks accurately and how these are to be met. Previous inspections have highlighted that monitoring and auditing systems in place have fluctuated.

The registered manager and staff team have positive working relationships with a range of agencies. The working relationship with a consultant psychologist is in the early stages and the staff team is already positive about consultation with her.

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: 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

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