

1254841

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 operated under trust arrangements to accommodate up to six children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The manager was registered on 1 April 2017. He has considerable experience for the position held.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 September 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 7 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/09/2017	Full	Outstanding

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

Recommendations

- 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)

In particular, the registered manager will ensure that all sanctions are recorded to monitor their effectiveness.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The young people develop excellent relationships with the adults who care for them. Inspectors observed natural and jovial interaction between the young people and their carers. This is balanced with firm boundaries and routines. The safe and consistent care that the young people receive helps them to make exceptional progress, taking into account their starting points.

The staff have varying skills and experience. They have a firm understanding of trauma and attachment. They are nurturing and confident in the responses given to the young people. This helps young people to feel safe and secure. The use of pen pictures helps the staff team to gather information and implement effective strategies from admission point. Subsequently, young people experience sensitive and welcoming admissions.

The young people are consulted in a variety of ways, including house meetings and key-worker sessions. One young person shared his views at the Houses of Parliament and received recognition for his contribution. The young people spoken to said that they felt listened to and confident that their carers would respond fairly and appropriately to their views and comments.

The staff team uses innovative and creative ways to match young people's interests to educational activities. There is an ongoing development of a yurt. There are several young people who particularly enjoy learning forestry skills. The yurt is helping to develop opportunities and enrich the experiences that young people have.

The young people have a diverse range of interests, backgrounds and cultures. The staff team and registered manager embrace diversity in a meaningful way that helps to educate young people and make them feel valued and part of a family unit. One young person recently celebrated Ramadan. The staff team and young people were able to

share part of that experience. Bullying has not been a significant issue in this home, as the staff team helps young people to develop respect and empathy for each other by embracing differences.

Every young person has 100% attendance in their educational setting. The staff have high aspirations for young people and work hard to maintain positive working relationships with schools and colleges. Through highly effective partnership working with educational professionals, one young person, at risk of permanent exclusion, has remained in their educational placement. Additionally, she went on to enjoy an overseas school trip.

There is firm evidence that young people are helped to develop independence skills that prepare them for adulthood. The registered manager is innovative, and this helps to engage the young people. There are examples of young people applying for jobs in the home. They can experience a recruitment process and develop the necessary skills. This helps young people to develop self-esteem and confidence.

Professionals from other agencies speak positively about the practice in the home. One professional commented: 'I love everything about this home and how dedicated they are. (Name, registered manager) is just so inspiring. They are so dedicated and aspirational. They want to get it right for the young people. The manager is so passionate, he gets to the point of what these children need. The standards for these children are so high.'

Young people's achievements are well celebrated. This has been captured in monthly letters from the staff team to each young person. The use of photographs and memory books helps to capture memorable events and celebrate the excellent progress of young people.

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

Risk assessment and risk management processes are of a high standard. The staff have received safeguarding training and been educated around specialist knowledge such as child sexual exploitation, torture, self-harm and attachment theory. The application of such knowledge strengthens the strategies identified in risk assessments to mitigate the risk of harm.

The staff are highly inventive in getting the young people to engage in activities. This helps to disrupt negative behaviours and to build positive relationships. 'Missing from home' episodes are not a concern for the young people currently living in the home. There were several 'missing' episodes for one young person who no longer lives in the home. At that time, the staff team followed the appropriate procedures, and return home interviews took place.

Low-level disruptive behaviours are addressed quickly. Restorative approaches are applied through sanctions. Overall, the paperwork and records are of a very high standard. To enable the registered manager to monitor the effectiveness of the

sanctions applied, they should be individually recorded.

The staff team supports young people and helps them to keep themselves safe. This was well evidenced through key-worker sessions. The staff team encourages each young person's development by balancing their interventions between keeping young people safe and recognising that young people need to take measured risks to develop appropriate skills.

Safeguarding is a stand-alone agenda item that is explored in supervisions, team meetings and consultations with a consultant psychologist. Police intelligence and multi-agency forums are used regularly to update the home's locality risk assessment, that links to the young people's risk assessments. This strengthens the safeguarding culture in the home.

When young people express an interest in joining clubs or a place of worship, the staff team researches what is in their local area. They build relationships with leaders and organisations to ensure that young people are consistently protected. Due to the proactive approaches taken by the staff team, there have been no critical incidents that have required a safeguarding referral to children's services.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced for the position held. He is supported in his role by an effective deputy manager and dedicated staff team. The registered manager is passionate and inspirational. He has been astute during the recruitment process. His staff have varying and complementary skills and knowledge. The registered manager's enthusiasm sets a precedence for the staff. They share his passion for achieving the best possible outcomes for the young people in their care.

The registered manager has effective systems in place to monitor progress and practice. All staff members have received both mandatory and specialist training linked to the needs of the young people. Newly recruited staff have received an appropriate induction.

The registered manager delegates roles to his staff team. This includes attending external meetings at which there is multi-agency sharing of information. The staff have also attended events in the local community that have celebrated diversity and culture. Staff members spoken to say that they feel supported in their role. There is a shared goal among the staff that the young people are their highest priority. The staff recognise and utilise each other's strengths and skills to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people.

The home's practice is very much founded on evidence-based research. The registered manager has been innovative in his approach to reflective practice. He has used 'How well do you know your child', which is a quiz-based activity. This enables key workers to think about the individual needs of young people and respond to them in a nurturing and therapeutic way.

The registered manager provides the staff team with regular and effective supervisions.

This is in addition to monthly staff meetings and consultations with the consultant psychologist.

There is firm evidence that the registered manager and deputy manager have advocated well for young people. This is evident where there have been shortfalls in the expected level of care. Additionally, the home encourages young people to have independent advocates. One young person is supported to represent young people's views at a young person's council meeting that takes place monthly. This enables young people to have their voice heard and contribute to the care that they receive.

The registered manager contributes to wider developments within the trust. This includes writing and developing the 'missing from home' policy. He has also shared good practice ideas to assist other homes that practise under the same trust.

The registered manager can identify the home's strengths and areas of development. He is aspirational and forward thinking. He does not become complacent but continues to drive improvements forward. This has led to home improvements, as well as practice and performance ideas, being implemented effectively since the home's last inspection.

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: 1254841

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland Limited

Registered provider address: City of Sunderland, Civic Centre, Burdon Road,
Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR2 7DN

Responsible individual: Catherine Witt

Registered manager: Michael More

Inspector

Jacqueline Tate, social care inspector

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