

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

The inspector spoke with two of the children during the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 1 April 2017.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

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: 14 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/03/2023	Full	Outstanding
14/12/2021	Full	Outstanding
22/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
18/09/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children living in this home are making exceptional progress, as a result of the care they receive and the strong relationships that they build with the manager and the staff.

Staff are highly skilled at building relationships with children. They know all of the children exceptionally well and show the children that they are valued. Staff in the home do not give up on children and will continue to offer care and support, even in the most difficult of circumstances.

The manager and staff are caring for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, where English is not their first language. Staff have gone over and above to ensure that the children and staff can communicate effectively. This includes helping children to develop a network of people from the same cultural background as them. This provides children with the opportunity to feel connected to people who speak in their first language.

All children are supported to celebrate different cultural and religious holidays and events. The children are currently participating in, or learning about, Ramadan. These events are central to supporting children's cultural and religious identity and exploring those of others. Children have celebrated Christmas and are looking forward to Eid and Easter.

All children feed back about their care in a variety of ways. This includes using the post box in the lounge and through discussions they have directly with staff. Where English is not a child's first language, the information about how to feed back comments or complaints is translated into their first language. This helps all children to understand their rights and feel confident that their voice is heard.

Children's introductions to the home are well thought out and planned. Children are given a colourful children's guide, which is translated into their first language, so staff know they understand it. Staff ensure that children are able to visit the home or take a virtual tour if this is not possible. Staff speak with the children and start to learn about them. This helps children to get to know the staff and become familiar with the home environment.

When children move on from the home, staff continue to support them emotionally and practically. Plans for a child's move are clearly thought out and the manager advocates strongly for the right placements for children. Children identify the home as their safe base and feel confident in returning to ask for help and support, which is always provided.

All children are attending an appropriate education provision and, consequently, they are making good progress. Staff work collaboratively with education professionals to ensure that children strive towards meeting their goals. One child's achievements have been recognised by the local authority, having been awarded the Young Achievers' Award. This child was highly commended for their achievements and progress in education.

Children attend health appointments with local GP, dental and optical services. Staff are persistent in pursuing specialist medical services for the children where these are required. One mental health professional praised the ability of staff in helping to raise children's self-esteem. Staff have supported children to view themselves as 'enjoyable and delightful people'.

Staff have a good understanding of each child's family dynamics and relationships with those important to them. This includes supporting children to make calls to family members who live in different parts of the world. Children are, therefore, able to maintain contact with their families, even in the most complicated of circumstances.

Staff celebrate important personal events for the children. Children celebrate their birthdays and the anniversary of their moving into the home. This helps children to feel special and valued. One child said that the efforts that staff made to celebrate their birthday made them feel 'like a million dollars'.

Some areas of the home are worn and in need of some care and attention. Two bedrooms were not maintained to the same high standard as the others.

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

Children feel safe and protected in the home by staff who they know have their best interests at heart. Staff have an in-depth understanding of the risk posed for each child and what is needed to keep them safer. The individualised risk assessments are regularly reviewed and evaluated to assess their success in reducing risks. This has led to sustained improvement for all children living at the home.

There has been a marked reduction in the number of times that children have gone missing from the home. Staff are skilled in building relationships with children so that any issues can be shared. This, in turn, reduces incidents which lead to children going missing and means that children are happy to spend time in the home. There have been no missing from care incidents for four months.

Staff are highly skilled at supporting children to develop their ability to manage how they react in response to their feelings. Staff help children to understand the impact of their behaviour through effective key-work sessions. This has meant that the number of incidents of negative behaviour in the home has reduced over time. Consequently, the use of physical restraint is low.

Staff have an excellent understanding of statutory safeguarding procedures. Staff understand their responsibilities if they have concerns about professional practice or if an allegation is made. They take timely and effective action to protect children. Staff share this information with professionals who share responsibility for safeguarding children. This decisive communication and excellent collaborative working means staff have a good understanding of the potential risks to children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is run by a passionate, confident and inspirational manager. The culture of the home is one of high expectations and standards of care. The manager has an excellent grip on the strengths of the home and what needs to improve. The manager and staff strive to make those improvements to the home and the service that they provide.

The manager has an exceptional understanding of the children in his care, their needs and their progress. He and the staff team are aspirational for what the children can achieve. The staff are influential in children's lives, and this has a lasting effect. Children who have left the service continue to visit and speak highly of the positive impact their time in the home has had.

Staff are recruited using a robust vetting process. This helps to ensure that those employed to work with children are qualified and able to provide quality care. Staff follow a thorough induction programme and have regular reviews of their progress. Staff at the home feel supported by managers and view this as working within a family or a community. This means that staff turnover is low. As a result, children are cared for by a stable staff team.

The manager is proactive in seeking feedback from professionals, stakeholders, staff and children. The manager uses this feedback alongside contemporary research to develop the home and the care provided to children. This ensures that the home is constantly evolving and improving, which means that the standards of care provided to the children continue to be outstanding.

Professionals have commented on the excellent relationships they have with staff at the home. Communication is also recognised as a particular strength. Staff communicate effectively with agency partners who are kept informed by regular, child-focused updates. One professional said that 'communication is excellent, detailed and timely'. This helps to ensure that children's plans move forward and children make significant progress.

Staff receive regular and reflective supervision, and they benefit from team meetings that also model reflective practice discussions. A particular strength of the home is the consistency in practice of the staff team.

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

- The registered person should ensure that for children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 1254841

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: Majella McCarthy

Registered manager: Michael More

Inspector

Lisa Gordon, Social Care Inspector

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