

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 has considerable experience and was registered on 1 April 2017.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 October 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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: 18 September 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/09/2018	Full	Outstanding
07/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/09/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children and young people live in a vibrant, well-maintained and welcoming home. Some areas have been fully refurbished to enhance the quality of the environment. A local artist has been commissioned to create a bespoke piece of artwork, designed by the children and young people. This input allows children and young people to share a unique experience and to see the impact of their views in a creative way.

Careful planning and consideration are given to the activities offered to children and young people. Holidays away are a regular occurrence, including a first trip abroad, which was a lifelong dream fulfilled for one young person. Children and young people have quality time invested in them by a consistently caring and nurturing team. These relationships allow children and young people to develop trust in their caring adults, which makes them feel secure.

The manager has extensively researched and secured funding for a project to enhance the day-to-day lives of children and young people. As a result, a puppy has recently been welcomed into the home. Children and young people are all involved in the process of training the puppy to be a therapy dog. This process enables children and young people to experience responsibility and to develop the understanding necessary to take care of others.

Children and young people who transition in and out of the home benefit from detailed and thoughtful planning. One professional said that the level of commitment to a young person who moved on was the best they had witnessed, with support still being available after their move. This shows children and young people that they continue to be important and cared about even when they have left the home. This improves their self-esteem and creates a sense of belonging.

The manager and his team work closely with a psychological service and use this resource to develop their practice to benefit children and young people. Care plans and case records are clearly linked, and this is strong evidence of a collaborative approach.

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

When risks to children and young people are identified, the manager takes a multi-agency and proactive approach to reduce risk before it has an impact. The manager has taken a creative approach to establishing safe and positive links for children and young people within the community. Children and young people are helped to learn how to resolve conflicts positively, which helps them to develop the skills needed to keep themselves safe. For some, this is exceptional progress from their starting points.

The staff team is highly experienced and possesses a broad range of skills. Some staff members are specially trained to deliver activities that enable children and young people to learn skills that reduce risks to them. This has resulted in children and young people

learning how to keep themselves safe and choosing to be safe.

Children and young people are helped to understand that bullying is not acceptable and regularly take part in activities that promote treating one another with respect. An outcome of this work is that children and young people have received an anti-bullying award to acknowledge the work they have done to keep themselves and others safe.

The inspector observed interactions between those in the home and found that staff are excellent role models of positive behaviour. This consistent practice helps children and young people to learn about communication, which improves their social skills.

The manager has devised a system to creatively develop children and young people's independent living skills. Specific job roles are defined so that children and young people may apply for that job, which replicates the working world. As skill levels of children and young people increase, so does the level of responsibility that they may take on. Children and young people are being helped to develop the attitude and skills required for employment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is a highly effective and motivational leader. His creativity, which is often innovative, has resulted in extensive progress and improvement since the last inspection. The manager uses his position to advocate for children and young people, challenging professionals when necessary and in the best interests of those in his care.

Staff receive regular and comprehensive supervision to drive improvement forward. Topics covered are explored further, when appropriate, in team meetings. This allows for good practice to be acknowledged and shared while presenting opportunity to discuss areas for improvement.

The well-being of children and young people, including their mental health, is seen as important. This extends to the staff team, whose members are invited to join activities such as meditation classes that take place weekly in the home. This, together with ongoing investment in training, makes staff feel valued and supported. Their feedback gave a clear picture that they share their manager's passion and vision and are proud to belong to this team.

The manager is constantly seeking to learn and draws upon the knowledge of those around him, also seeking input from other agencies. He demonstrates through his work a strong desire to improve the lives of children and young people, sharing practice that may be beneficial to other providers.

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: 1254841

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland Limited

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

Responsible individual: Martin Birch

Registered manager: Michael More

Inspector

Paula Kelly: social care inspector

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