

1254841

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed under trust arrangements. It provides care for up to 6 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2017.

At the time of the inspection, 4 children were living in the home. The inspector spoke with 3 of the children during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 February 2026

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: 26 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2025	Full	Outstanding
19/03/2024	Full	Outstanding
14/03/2023	Full	Outstanding
14/12/2021	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff provide exceptional care to the children, who have made excellent progress since moving into the home. Staff provide a highly nurturing environment and genuinely love and care for the children. Staff have high aspirations for the children.

Managers ensure that any new child who comes to live at the home is well matched with the current children and that the staff can meet all their needs. Before a child moves into the home, staff meet them and begin to build a rapport with them. They learn as much about their history as possible to understand what is important for the child and begin to build a positive relationship from the outset.

There is a culture of maintaining lifelong links at the home. During the inspection, 4 adults who had been children living at the home were spoken to about their experiences of living at the home. One left 15 years ago but visits every few months and describes it as 'home'. One who left 5 years ago is now working for the local authority and said that their inspiration for this work was entirely due to their experiences at the home. They visit regularly and said, 'They are like my family. I can't describe it; I go home to [name of home]. I loved living there.' Another 2 young people, who have recently moved onto independent living, also visit the home regularly and had an exceptional experience living in the home. One of their relatives said, 'The staff are amazing. I can't thank them enough. It feels like a home; they stuck by [name of child]. They treat [name of child] as one of their own. Any kid who comes here will be amazed.' The positive memories held by previous children and the fact that they feel comfortable to continue visiting regularly are testament to the unconditional love and care they experienced when they lived at the home.

All the children living at the home have made educational progress from their individual starting points. One child who was not attending school one year ago now has an apprenticeship. Their employer said that they think the staff are fantastic. The 3 other children are all accessing education at a rate that they can manage. This is regularly reviewed and increased at the child's pace.

Staff consult with a clinical psychologist monthly to ensure that they provide the best care for children. They show curiosity and use a trauma-informed approach. They prioritise positive relationships with children and work at the pace of the child. Staff are reflective and want to understand each child.

Staff are proactive about exploring relationships with people who are important to the children. Some children are not ready to build relationships with their extended network, but staff continue to develop these relationships so that they are able to support children to reconnect when they are ready.

Staff stick with children through good and difficult times. They have never given up on a child and have always managed to develop trusting relationships with children.

Staff ensure that children know they are loved and valued. Staff produce beautiful memory books for children, including many photographs of fun and memorable activities. Staff write notes for children, recognising their achievements, and send them postcards with positive messages. All achievements and important dates are celebrated.

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

Risk assessments are easy to understand and regularly updated to include any new risks. Expectations of staff are clear. One child has significantly reduced their substance misuse. This was achieved by staff understanding why the child was using drugs. They did structured work with them around the risks, helping the child to develop other meaningful activities and working with the child's family to promote a consistent approach. Such a highly effective response had led to reduced risks for the child.

Children know that staff will keep them safe. When children are in trouble, they contact staff who immediately help them. Staff understand the vulnerabilities of each child and put appropriate boundaries in place. They develop trusting relationships with children, which leads to children knowing that staff will help them when needed. One child said, 'I can talk to staff. If I ever have a problem, I wouldn't hesitate to speak to them; they always help.'

Staff complete individualised work with each child to help them understand risks. Such specific work helps to reduce risks for the child while living in the home and arms them with the skills to manage future risks when they leave the home.

Staff understand the importance of working with each child at their own pace. One child felt unable to trust anyone when they first moved into the home. Staff have sought specialist advice and have worked consistently with the child. They are now beginning to form trusting relationships. As staff have been attuned to the child's feelings, they are now beginning to feel safe.

Staff listen to children proactively so that they understand their worries. They work with the child to build their confidence so that the child feels able to tackle issues that they feel are daunting.

There have been no physical interventions during this inspection period. Newer staff commented that it has been a learning curve, observing how situations can be managed without the need for physical intervention and seeing that staff can manage difficult incidents because of their positive relationships with children. This highlights the level of trust and the excellent relationships between staff and children.

The number of missing episodes has significantly reduced as children become settled at the home. The registered manager reviews any missing incidents, noting any patterns

and updating plans accordingly. This level of oversight contributes to the safety of children.

The registered manager has formed effective links with the local police and community safety hubs. This enables the staff to keep abreast of any changing risks in the community that may impact on the children, and they can therefore alter safety plans accordingly.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers are child focused and dedicated to continuing to improve practice to ensure the best outcomes for children. Staff say that they feel supported by managers. There is a positive culture in the home where staff are encouraged to help each other. Staff achievements are celebrated.

Management oversight is thorough. The registered manager considers incidents in context and looks at any patterns and trends. He ensures that all relevant professionals are informed and that documents are updated. The monthly auditing of files is completed and there is significant evidence of staff being supported to improve their recording. Staff say that they find this very helpful.

Leaders and managers advocate for children strenuously. They challenge other professionals where appropriate. When there were concerns about the education of one child, this was challenged, with a positive outcome. Managers also successfully challenged the plan for a child to live with a family member when they felt this was not in the best interests of the child. One professional said, 'They are supportive and they advocate. They provide emotional support at critical times.'

Practice-related supervision sessions are reflective and consider the needs of all children and how these can be met. Staff can talk openly and honestly in supervision sessions and feel listened to and supported.

Research-informed practice is evident. The registered manager has used the signs of safety approach and embedded this into the practice in the home. This work has also been shared with other homes in the area.

The registered manager is committed to staff development. All staff have an individual responsibility for specific tasks and are supported in their development. This leads to energised staff who are committed to develop practice for the benefit of the children.

No requirements or recommendations were made during the inspection.

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 address: Sunderland City Council, City Hall, Plater Way,
Sunderland SR1 3AA

Responsible individual: Sharon Willis

Registered manager: Michael More

Inspector

Karen Karlsson, Social Care Inspector

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