

1254843

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. The home provides care for up to six children who may have emotional and social difficulties.

Six children were living in the home at the time of the inspection, and the inspector spoke with three of them.

The suitably experienced and qualified manager registered with Ofsted in December 2021.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 May 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 10 May 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/05/2022	Full	Good
06/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/05/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/11/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children benefit from stable living arrangements. Staff are trained in a therapeutic approach to parenting children. This supports children to build trusting relationships with staff. Children are therefore making good progress from their starting points.

The home is a welcoming and warm environment. Children benefit from generous communal and personalised spaces, including games rooms. The home has good activities and resources to engage children and enrich their lives. This helps children build social relationships, develop confidence and gain new skills.

Staff understand and promote children's individual needs, taking into account their cultural, religious and language differences. Children are supported to integrate into the community and access local services. Staff also encourage children to participate in sporting activities and fundraising events. This supports children to develop their sense of community, identity and achievement.

Children have established relationships with more than one member of staff who they say they can trust. Children said they know how to make a complaint if they wish to. This means that children are helped to build and maintain positive relationships and feel listened to.

Not all children who live in the home are accessing education, employment or skills training. However, where this is the case, staff work with professionals to support children in applying for employment or apprenticeship opportunities. One professional said that staff 'go the extra mile,' and another explained, 'They work hard to get [name of child] into school when [name of child] is reluctant.' This approach maintains a focus on helping children to make progress in education to reach their full potential.

Children moving out of the home benefit from transitions that are well managed and supported by staff. Staff stay connected with these children to reduce feelings of isolation and provide essential support. This supports children to maintain positive attachments with adults who have cared for them.

Staff actively promote time for the children to spend with their important family members. Children have re-established relationships with family members through the support and encouragement of staff. This supports children's identity and contributes to their understanding of their life story.

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

Staff ensure that children's risk assessments are kept up to date. Staff follow safeguarding procedures, and there is accurate recording of safeguarding incidents. Children are better protected from harm as staff understand their roles and responsibilities.

The manager completes an assessment to consider the impact of known risk factors on each child who is to live in the home or is already a resident. This allows the manager to assess whether staff have the right skills to meet the competing needs of all children. Children benefit from this careful planning, which supports stable placements.

There have been no physical interventions since the last inspection. Staff understand how to respond to children in distress and are trained in safe and effective practice methods. This means that children are well supported and feel safe and secure in their home.

Staff use consequences to reinforce the rules and expectations in the home. The consequences are explained to children and are designed to be restorative in nature. This helps children to learn about consequences and the benefits of positive behaviour.

Incidents of children going missing from the home are rare. Staff follow the children's risk assessments and missing-from-home procedures. When children return, they are welcomed back into the home, and return home interviews are offered. This provides children with an opportunity to discuss their experiences with an independent person and an opportunity for staff to learn from this and better protect children.

When bedroom searches are undertaken, the decision to conduct them is recorded and appropriate. However, staff do not record that children's permission has been sought or that they have been provided feedback. This means children are not provided with an explanation for why adults access their personal space.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced and qualified manager. He is supported by a deputy and experienced workers. Feedback from staff shows they feel valued and supported by leaders and managers.

Leaders and managers care about the children and are child-focused. They are creative about how to improve children's life experiences. Managers know the children well and understand the progress they are making in their care. This ensures children's progress is central to care planning and decision-making.

Supervision takes place regularly, and the quality of this has improved. Records show evidence of reflective practice, a focus on children and safeguarding, and staff

development. These themes continue into team meetings to enhance the individual's and the team's understanding of good practice. As a result of the staff's focus on learning and development, children benefit from good care practices in the home.

Measures are in place to ensure staff are recruited safely. This prevents unsuitable adults from being recruited to work with the children who live in the home. This helps protect vulnerable children.

The manager ensures that staff have a structured training programme that is specific to the individual needs of the children. New staff are provided with mandatory training and shadowing experiences with more experienced staff. New staff are therefore able to develop relationships with children and learn essential skills before taking responsibility for their care.

Managers have implemented monitoring systems in the home to scrutinise children's files and the work completed by staff. However, this is not always effective in identifying shortfalls. Some children's care plans and the recording of direct work were not up to date or signed and did not reflect the children's current circumstances. Therefore, staff do not have access to accurate, essential information held on files.

Not all staff have gained the required qualification for their roles within the appropriate timescales. Managers were not clear about the reasons for this and were unable to provide evidence to assure themselves that staff had the necessary skills for the role. This lack of monitoring of staff qualifications could lead to children being cared for by adults who do not have the relevant qualifications to meet their needs safely.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))	14 June 2023
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) This particularly relates to children's care plans and direct work completed with the child.	14 June 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure a child's bedroom is not generally entered without their permission, though it may be necessary to establish routines to allow for rooms to be cleaned regularly. Usually, rooms should only be searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. Immediate searching may be necessary where there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is a risk to the child's or another person's safety or well-being. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)

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: 1254843

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: Paul Rudd

Inspector

Joanne Wallis, Social Care Inspector

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