

1254843

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland Limited

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

During this inspection, the inspector spoke with three children who live in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2021.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/05/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/11/2019	Full	Good
09/10/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress from their starting points and recognise the progress they have made. The relationships between the children and the staff are good. Staff are committed to the children and their well-being. Two children scored living in the home as eight out of 10 and said they know that the staff care about them and keep them safe.

Children are confident in speaking to staff if they need to raise something, and complaints leaflets are freely accessible to them in the home. This provides the children with opportunities to express themselves if they are unhappy.

Documents such as the children's guide and complaints leaflets are translated for children where English is not their first language. Staff also use translators to communicate with the children when needed. Staff support the cultural needs of children and celebrate cultural and religious festivities in the home. This provides all children in the home with the opportunity to learn about other cultures and traditions, thus increasing their understanding of the world around them.

The home is warm and welcoming and is decorated and furnished to a high standard, with improvements made since the last inspection. These include an American-themed diner and a revamped games room where children said they spend a lot of time socialising together and also with staff. There are photographs of the children enjoying activities displayed throughout the home. However, one child's wardrobe is damaged and has missing doors, and only one child has their own lockable cabinet in their bedroom. This means that the children cannot store their personal items securely in their own bedroom.

Not all the children are currently in education, employment or training and the staff's response to this varies. One education professional said that the staff had not attended a parents' evening for one child and the attendance and punctuality of two children have deteriorated since they moved into the home. The staff's lack of consistent approach means that not all children are supported effectively to reach their educational potential.

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

Children said that they feel safe living in this home. This is in part due to the consistent approach of staff in managing children's behaviour. There are clear expectations and boundaries in place, which the children understand and respond to. As a result, there are few missing-from-home incidents, no complaints, and the incidents requiring physical intervention from staff are rare. This approach supports the children to further develop their relationships with the staff, thus keeping them increasingly safe.

The home's management undertakes detailed impact risk assessments before a child moves into the home. The manager's evaluation of the risks and recommendation of

the suitability of the placement are clear. The robustness of this process means that when the children move into the home, they have been appropriately matched.

Staff understand safeguarding procedures and take appropriate action to reduce the immediate risk. However, shortfalls have been identified with regards to follow-up actions. For example, the local authority designated officer was not contacted following an allegation against a member of staff. While these shortfalls have not had a negative impact on any of the children, it is important that the staff understand their roles and responsibilities to keep the children safe.

Children's records are regularly updated to reflect changes in their circumstances. Identified hazards, including the pond and the gym, have specific risk assessments in place. However, there is no risk assessment for the staff's dogs that visit and stay at the home on occasion. This activity has not been assessed, which potentially places the children at risk.

While the use of physical intervention in this home is rare, the records are not completed as required by regulation. Actions are not dated, so it is impossible to establish whether they have been completed within the required timescale. Also, one record does not indicate whether the child has been offered the services of an advocate or whether they want to make a complaint following being held. These shortfalls in recording mean that it cannot be established whether the holds are safe, necessary and proportionate.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced and qualified registered manager who is supported by a full team of staff and a deputy manager. Safer recruitment processes are followed when staff are appointed, which provides assurances that staff are suitably vetted and qualified to provide care.

The home's management has made several improvements since the last full inspection. The management team is passionate and committed to further improving the quality of care provided. This vision is shared by the staff. As a result, the children benefit from staffing arrangements that provide them with stability and security.

The manager ensures that the staff complete mandatory training. Staff undertake training that is relevant to the individual needs of the children. Staff also have regular access to the services of a child psychologist who supports them in the delivery of the home's therapeutic model of care, as outlined in the home's statement of purpose.

The shortfall identified at the last inspection with regards to some children's records not being signed and dated remains. While there has been no impact identified, this means that there continues to be a potential lack of accountability, which may place children at risk. This recommendation will therefore be reissued.

Supervision takes place regularly, but the quality and robustness of these sessions vary depending on the supervisor. There is also a lack of reflective supervision from one supervisor. This lack of consistency means that not all staff are receiving the same quality of supervision, scrutiny and opportunity to reflect on their practice.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) 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 person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement; and help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vi)(x))	11 August 2022
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if	11 June 2022

necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vii)) This specifically relates to risk assessments and the staff's role and responsibilities with regards to safeguarding episodes.	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and	11 June 2022

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.

(Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b)

(3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

This specifically relates to restraint records.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children are provided with appropriate furniture, including a lockable cabinet or drawers to securely store personal items, including any personal information. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.19)
- The registered person should ensure that there are systems in place so that all the staff receive regular supervision of an equal quality and standard, so that they can reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that case records are kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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: Stanfield Business Centre, Addison Street,
Sunderland SR2 8SZ

Responsible individual: Majella McCarthy

Registered manager: Paul Rudd

Inspector

Paula Shepherd, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022