

1254843

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority owns and manages this children's home. It provides care for up to six children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

Five children were being offered care at the time of the inspection. During the inspection, four children were spoken to.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2024.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 July 2024

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: 3 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/05/2023	Full	Good
10/05/2022	Full	Good
06/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/05/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children feel safe and have built trusted relationships with staff. Children say they have more than one member of staff they can trust and speak to about any worries, and they feel listened to. One child said, 'Staff are good and listen to me.' This supports children to feel valued and accepted for themselves and make progress. Children know how to make a complaint if they want to.

Staff are trained in the therapeutic approach to parenting. Children are supported to be involved in decision-making about their plans. Staff promote the child's voice being heard and support the child to share their views. This helps children develop confidence and empowers them to have their voices heard.

Children have access to a wide range of opportunities that reflect their hobbies and interests or provide new experiences. Children attend local clubs or benefit from the numerous activities on offer in the home. Children from different cultures or who are exploring their identity are offered opportunities of support with this. This support enables children to maintain or explore their culture and identity in a safe and accepting environment.

Not all children are fully engaged in their education provision. Staff have developed effective communication with education professionals and are supporting alternative arrangements for learning. When children are not accessing their education, staff encourage and promote attendance and alternative provision is provided. One professional said 'staff go above and beyond'.

Children moving out of the home benefit from well-managed transitions. Staff support any child moving on and stay in contact to maintain the relationship. Children are welcomed into the home in a planned way. Children are given a 'welcome guide' to provide them with essential information before moving in. The welcome guide is outdated and needs to be reviewed to ensure that children are provided with accurate information about the home in a sensitive way.

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

Staff understand children's risks. Risk assessments are clear and regularly updated. Staff respond in line with a child's plan to reduce harm when a risk is identified. Staff have built up positive relationships with professionals and family members and complete accurate written documents of safeguarding incidents. Children benefit from staff who understand their safeguarding responsibilities and reduce the risk of harm.

Children do not regularly go missing. If a child is missing from care, staff follow the child's plan. They actively look for the child and liaise with family members, if appropriate, to support a safe return home. When children return home, they are

welcomed back and offered a return home interview. This provides an opportunity to explore the learning and identify any patterns to better protect children.

Staff are skilled at de-escalation. The use of physical intervention is rare and used as a last resort. Staff understand how to manage behaviours and respond to children's needs, which means children feel safe. Following any physical intervention, children are offered the opportunity to speak to an independent person and staff are debriefed. This supports reflective learning for staff to learn from the incidents that have happened and inform future practice.

Positive behaviour by the children is promoted, and staff use consequences to manage expectations of behaviour in the home. The consequences used have been financial and do not reflect a restorative approach. This means that children are not benefiting from the restorative approach that helps them understand the impact of their actions on others.

The staff ensure that the home is safe for children to live in. Health and safety certificates and assessments are completed and up to date. However, not all fire doors are kept closed as assessed in the risk assessment. This means that in the event of an emergency, such as a fire, the door would not be effective and would increase the risk to anyone inside the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has a qualified manager and the children benefit from a consistent staff team. The recent change in manager circumstances has been mitigated by a proactive response in the team to reduce the impact on the children. The manager is supported by a deputy manager and a senior team. Feedback from staff is positive and shows they trust in the manager and feel valued.

Staff are appropriately recruited and trained. Safer recruitment checks are completed to prevent unsuitable adults from working in the home. Staff benefit from a robust training offer and are enrolled on relevant qualification programmes. This means children benefit from staff who are knowledgeable and qualified to meet their needs safely. Staff who are completing their qualification are tracked to ensure that progress is being made and any delay is identified and addressed.

The manager and staff receive regular supervision. Supervision focuses on the children and their care, and records show evidence of reflective practice and ensuring staff competence. This ensures that staff are meeting the expected standards in providing care to the children. Supervision explores staff knowledge about safeguarding responses and assures the manager that staff can safely meet the needs of the children.

The manager is knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the care they provide. The manager is open to challenge and recommendations to support future change and has built up positive multi-agency links with professionals. The manager

uses this and the information provided to support development in the offer of care to ensure it is effective in meeting children's needs.

The manager has developed an effective monitoring tool to review the quality of care. This includes quality assuring the children's records and also the documents used in the home. However, not all documents have been reviewed efficiently. The location assessment is out of date and does not identify all the amenities and potential risks in the locality. Therefore, staff do not have access to all the essential information to support children in staying safe.

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, The 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
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1)(2))	21 October 2024

Recommendations

- Children's homes should comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene, etc.). Fire doors should be free from obstruction. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should review and update the children's guide as necessary, and make sure children are given an explanation of any changes. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.23)
- The behaviour management strategy should be understood and applied at all times by staff, and must be kept under review and revised where appropriate. Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraphs 9.34 and 9.38)

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: Sharon Willis

Registered manager: Paul Rudd
Suzannah Ellis-Jones

Inspectors

Kate Jackson, Social Care Inspector
Vikki Thwaites, Social Care Inspector

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