

2741826

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 by a local authority. It provides care for up to two children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home. The inspector spoke with both children during the inspection.

The registered manager post is currently vacant. An interim manager is in place and has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 November 2025

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: 14 July 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/07/2025	Full	Inadequate
25/11/2024	Full	Good
31/01/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy positive relationships with the staff in the home, who know them well and have high aspirations for them. Children can recall individual jokes and memories that they have with staff and children speak fondly of them. One child said, 'I love living here.'

Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home in a planned way. This was managed sensitively and with care. Managers supported staff to understand the child, their background, and their needs before they moved in. Staff explored the child's likes and dislikes to ensure that their bedroom was decorated in a way that was important to them. Preparation work was also undertaken with the children already living in the home. When the child, who was moving into the home visited, staff supported both children, ensuring that the introductions were positive.

Children have opportunities to try different activities. Staff understand the importance of children accessing activities appropriate to their individual ages and wishes. Staff know what children like and think of creative ways to encourage them to engage in group and individual activities.

Staff encourage children to share their views, wishes and feelings. Children say that they feel listened to. Children participate in discussions about their daily care, and they have full oversight of all aspects of their care. Staff complete monthly summaries to highlight children's progress. Children see these and add their own views and thoughts, developing their confidence in their own individual progress.

Staff encourage and advocate for children to have positive relationships with their family and other people important to them. When children need and request life-story work, staff support this with direct work and advocating for more specialist input. Their aim is to provide children with closure and answers to their questions. These efforts support children with a sense of understanding and identity.

There have been significant improvements made within the home environment. Staff are working towards an environment that reflects that of a family home. However, there are still areas that need further development, such as carpets and furniture that need to be replaced.

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

Staff provide consistent routines and boundaries to children. The structure children receive supports them to know and understand their daily care. Children say that they feel safe because of this. Children feel less anxious, resulting in a reduction of incidents.

Staff complete regular one-to-one sessions with children. They encourage children to reflect on their actions while supporting their well-being. The sessions contribute to children understanding their own risks and implementing strategies to help them manage these risks.

Staff use professional curiosity to explore potential risks to children. They explore new relationships and complete checks, ensuring that children are safeguarded from risk.

Regular meetings with external agencies provide staff with the knowledge and skills to keep children safe. Staff work closely with specialist services to continuously advance their understanding of children's individual risks. The knowledge they gain develops their practice and secures good-quality care for children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The members of the current management team have recently joined the home. They strive for staff to provide children with a high standard of individualised care. They use effective audits to gain full oversight of the home. They have identified shortfalls and development areas, quickly implementing strategies to secure improvement in children's experiences, staff practice, and the daily running of the home. They are regularly present within the home, enhancing children's overall experiences by role modelling good practice.

The interim manager has a clear vision for the home. She has been proactive in developing a strategic plan to continue improving the home over the next year, embedding her ethos of continuous development.

Staff say that they enjoy working in the home. The implemented changes have provided a positive working environment where staff are comfortable and confident to seek support regularly. The development of staff practice is a priority. Regular supervision sessions provide safe space for reflection. Team meetings provide training and encourage open discussion of children's daily care. Staff are allocated their own roles, providing them with a sense of accountability and achievement. The staff are working as a team and supporting each other.

Most staff have achieved or are working to complete the relevant qualification for their role within the required timescale. However, there has been no scrutiny to ensure that staff who have alternative qualifications have the skills and knowledge to achieve the required qualification.

Shortfalls in safer recruitment practice have been identified. For one member of staff, gaps in employment have not been thoroughly explored to provide satisfactory explanation.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is nurturing and supportive, reflecting that of homely environment. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff in a care role have the relevant qualifications within the relevant timescales. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 53, paragraph 10.12)
- The registered person should ensure that safer recruitment practice is maintained, including satisfactory explanation of any gaps in employment. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: 2741826

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sunderland City Council

Registered provider address: City Hall, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA

Responsible individual: Sharon Willis

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sarah McGow, Social Care Inspector

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