

2744459

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 by a local authority. It provides care for up to four children with social and/or emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The home and the manager were registered with Ofsted in November 2023.

Two children were living in the home at the time of the inspection. The inspectors spoke to both the children.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 June 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 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/05/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children stay at the home for up to 12 weeks. There is robust information-sharing and decision-making before children move in. The decision-making considers staff's ability to meet the needs of all children and manage any impact on children who already live in the home. Staff share information with new providers or families when children leave the home. This means that children's needs are known and supported across different settings.

Staff establish nurturing relationships with children. A supportive and positive environment is created through warm and friendly interactions. Staff take a genuine interest in children and celebrate their achievements. Children can share their thoughts, feelings and concerns during meaningful time with staff.

Staff encourage children to attend education and achieve. Two children have recently completed their GCSEs. Children talk with staff about their futures. Staff have taken children to further education information events and have helped one child to apply for an apprenticeship. Children have been supported to compile their CVs in the hope of gaining employment.

Children maintain relationships with people who are important to them. Staff support children to have meaningful experiences with family members. Some children have moved back to the care of their family. Staff contribute to the transition plans for children, which have resulted in successful moves for children. When children leave the home, staff are sensitive to the feelings of children.

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

Staff understand and use the children's individual behaviour support plans to support them. Children contribute to their behaviour support plans. Behaviour support plans consider the impact of past trauma on children's presentation and how they need to be cared for. Staff meet with a psychologist monthly and use the psychologist's support to embed trauma-informed practice and responses to behaviour.

Staff receive training in de-escalation and physical intervention skills. Physical intervention would only be used as a last resort to ensure children's safety.

Staff establish trusting relationships with children. Children feel that they can trust the adults around them and feel listened to. Children are encouraged to understand acceptable behaviours through a restorative approach. When consequences are used to address negative behaviour, they are fair, balanced and time-limited.

Since moving to the home, some children's missing episodes have reduced. When children go missing, staff are proactive in trying to locate the children. Staff

communicate with children's families and other professionals, working collaboratively to ensure that children return back to the home safely. When children return home, they are welcomed back with warmth from staff. Independent return home interviews and key-work sessions are offered to children.

Children's risk assessments and care plans identify the need for key-work sessions to help children stay safe. Children complete key-work sessions around identified and emerging risks. Children use the key-work sessions to talk about their feelings and behaviours. Staff help children to understand the risks and dangers attached to their actions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is ambitious and passionate about children. She is supported by an experienced deputy manager and the senior leaders. Together, the managers are instrumental in ensuring that staff understand children's needs and take effective action. The managers know the staff team and the children well. They understand the home's strengths and weaknesses and have good plans to further develop the service to keep children safe.

Multi-agency working is strong. Professionals and a family member gave positive feedback that the children are making progress because of the support they receive from the staff.

Team meetings are well attended and held on a regular and frequent basis. This provides managers with ongoing opportunities to promote and maintain consistent care practices across the staff team.

There are thorough quality assurance processes used by the managers. They have good oversight of all plans and reports. All documents are evaluated, and comments are added by the managers. Such oversight helps staff to learn and develop their skills. A range of audits are also in place to ensure health and safety in the home.

Most staff have completed the local authority's mandatory training; however, less than half of the staff have undertaken training that is specific to children's individual needs. This is a missed opportunity for the managers to ensure that all staff are fully equipped with the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the children in their care.

Staff receive regular supervision and speak positively about the manager's support. Discussions are wide-ranging. However, supervision records do not consistently capture the depth of the discussions and the reflection that has taken place. This does not support staff to fully understand and fulfil their responsibilities and hinders managers' ability to effectively monitor practice.

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

Statutory requirements

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

Requirement	Due date
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))	21 July 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that supervision enables staff to reflect on how children's behaviours may impact their own emotions and responses, and to develop strategies to manage these effectively. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.15)

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: 2744459

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland Limited

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

Responsible individual: Sharon Willis

Registered manager: Andrea Dowd

Inspectors

Cherie Chen, Social Care Inspector

Ali Owens, Social Care Inspector

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