

SC008575

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a charitable organisation and provides care for up to five children who may have physical disabilities and/or special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The home provides short-term breaks together with long-term placements for up to five children.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2016.

Inspection dates: 29 February and 1 March 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: 14 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/02/2023	Full	Good
13/10/2021	Full	Good
04/12/2019	Full	Good
08/01/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

When new children access the short-break service, the manager ensures that thoughtful and careful planning takes place. Thorough assessments are completed, and children are provided with opportunities to visit the home. Staff do all they can to ensure that children are sensitively welcomed. One parent said, 'They were brilliant; they really helped to prepare him for his first overnight stay.'

Care planning in the home is effective. The manager ensures that children's support and care plans are child-focused and regularly reviewed. Children's complex health needs are well understood and safely managed by staff.

Staff support and encourage children to take part in a wide variety of activities during their stay. Staff are enthusiastic and passionate about children's experiences. When there are barriers, staff do all they can to overcome these. One parent said, 'They do exceptionally well; just because he can't see, they don't see this as a barrier; they take him to the cinema, ice skating, bowling; they do a lot for him to make sure he has fun.'

Children are supported to build positive, trusting and secure relationships with the staff who care for them. Staff are nurturing in their approach. They spend quality time with children and know them well. Staff understand the individual needs of each child and know how best to support them.

Children's views, wishes and feelings are held in high regard. Staff have an extensive knowledge and understanding of each child's preferred communication method, including any aids that they may use. They are creative in their approach, and they support children to fully participate in making decisions about their daily lives.

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

Staff are clear about safeguarding procedures. When there are concerns about the safety of a child, staff know what to do and ensure prompt action.

When there have been allegations and suspicions of harm to children, the manager ensures that internal investigations take place, and any learning is quickly implemented. However, they do not share information with local authority designated officers and safeguarding partners in a timely manner. Additionally, the manager does not always notify the regulator. This limits external review of safeguarding issues.

There have been occasions when children have displayed behaviours of concern. Records are detailed, and it is clear what action staff have taken to manage the behaviour and minimise risk. All records are reviewed by the manager. Reflective debriefs take place with staff and any learning is identified.

Physical intervention has not been used in the home. Staff are skilled communicators and receive specialist training to support them in their role. Staff know the children well and, because of this, can support children to manage any behaviour or difficult feelings they may have effectively.

Safer recruitment means that only the most suitable staff work at the home. Arrangements to ensure the health and safety of the home mean that it is a safe place for children to live in.

Fire safety is a priority. Each child has a personal emergency evacuation plan. Children and staff regularly practise evacuating the building in case of a fire. Therefore, everyone knows how to respond in an emergency.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers are experienced and suitably qualified. The manager is supported by a team of experienced leaders who share the manager's values, ethos and dedication. They lead by example: they are inspirational and ambitious for children.

Staff feel valued and supported by their manager. They work together to provide a consistent and stable home for children.

Staff receive regular supervisions in line with the home's statement of purpose. The supervisions are well planned, structured, purposeful and reflective. New staff receive regular probationary reviews, and all staff receive annual appraisals of their performance. However, appraisals do not contain feedback from children and other professionals.

Staff receive an extensive training package. This consists of mandatory, specialist and bespoke training to meet the needs of the children. New staff speak highly of the training and induction programme. They value this and say that it has helped to prepare them for their role.

The manager understands the importance of effective partnership working. They nurture positive working relationships with other professionals and children's family members. This contributes towards children's positive experiences in the home. One social worker said, 'Communication is excellent; they always keep me updated and communication between families is really good; they have excellent relationships.'

The home is visited monthly by an independent person who produces a report. However, there are occasions when the report from the independent person is inaccurate and when safeguarding has not been fully considered during the visit.

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 person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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— take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vi)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that when there are concerns regarding a staff member's practice and a child's welfare, there is not a delay when sharing these concerns with the local safeguarding partners.	29 March 2024
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that when there has been an allegation of abuse against a person working in the home, they notify Ofsted.	29 March 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should include the views of the children and external professionals when carrying out appraisals with staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person should ensure that when the independent visitor visits the home, they have access to all safeguarding information so that the information

can be considered in their reports. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, 15.5)

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: SC008575

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Registered provider address: The Together Trust Centre, Schools Hill, Cheadle SK8 1JE

Responsible individual: Jill Sheldrake

Registered manager: Helen Marston

Inspector

Kimmy Feeley, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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