

SC025712

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to care for up to two children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The registered manager has been in post since 29 October 2010.

Inspection dates: 11 September 2018

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: 8 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/11/2017	Full	Good
21/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/09/2016	Full	Good
16/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— - include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; - are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, staff should ensure that copies of young people's personal education plans are on file.	30/11/2018
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1)(4)(a)(b) and (5)) In particular, the independent person's report should be specific and tailored to the individual home. Any summary or opinion about the safeguarding arrangements in place should be accurate and reflective of the observations at the time of the visit.	30/11/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure that care provided should meet each child's needs and promote their welfare, taking into account the child's gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, and disability, their assessed needs, previous experiences and any relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.2). In

particular, placement plans should outline how personalised care will be provided to young people.

- Ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risk to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5). In particular, risk assessments should be reviewed regularly and provide up-to-date information about young people's vulnerabilities and the strategies in place to keep young people safe.
- Ensure that staff develop strong working relationships with the placing authority in order that care planning is effective and placements are successful. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.2)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people benefit from caring relationships with staff. A young person enthusiastically told the inspector how much he likes spending time with staff. This is because staff take an interest in him, they do fun things together and they show him every day that they care about him.

Supportive and caring staff provide young people with the skills they need to make progress across all aspects of their lives. A young person told the inspector that his attendance and achievements in school were as a direct result of the boundaries and help provided by staff. Young people are given the encouragement and support needed to engage in school and achieve academic success.

Staff are proactive in promoting young people's contact with their families. For example, staff facilitate one young person's contact in the community. This means that the young person's family members can commit to the contact sessions. This ensures that the young person can maintain his relationships with important loved ones.

Staff are successful at planning for young people's transitions out of the home. In one instance, staff provided a young person with a hamper of his favourite food items to take with him to his new placement. This was supplemented with regular phone calls by staff after the young person had left. This caring act helped the young person to manage his anxieties about his new life away from the home.

In some instances, young people's placement plans do not sufficiently reflect the extent to which young people receive personalised care. Although the impact of this is low, these documents do not always provide staff with clarity on how best to support young people.

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

Staff are effective at keeping young people safe. Young people do not present with risk-taking behaviours. This means there have been no incidents of young people going missing, no self-harm and no concerns about the risk of exploitation.

Staff promote young people's positive behaviour on a day-to-day basis through praise and spontaneous rewards. Formalised reward charts are not required as young people respond well to clear boundaries and make good progress.

In some instances, risk assessments contain out-of-date information. Although the impact of this is low, it is not representative of the home's otherwise robust approach to safeguarding.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is well established in her role and has extensive experience. The registered manager is supported by an equally experienced deputy manager.

In most instances, the leadership of the home is strong, with good monitoring systems in place. Despite this, one recommendation from the last Ofsted inspection has not been addressed. Specifically, staff do not ensure that copies of personal education plans are on file. This has not had an impact on staff's ability to promote the young people's educational outcomes.

External audits by an independent person have not been sufficiently robust. For example, the independent person identified that staff had not obtained a personal education plan for one young person but missed the opportunity to set this as an action to be completed. The independent person's reports include a standardised paragraph to describe his opinion as to whether young people are safeguarded and their welfare promoted. This limits the extent to which these reports assist staff to improve the quality of care provided to young people.

Staff are successful at developing relationships with partner agencies, including social workers and schools. This means that, in most cases, staff work successfully with partner agencies to promote the needs of young people. Despite this, some anonymous feedback received prior to the inspection indicated that, in some instances, staff do not provide monthly update reports to local authorities. This appears to be an isolated incident as information from placing authorities received during the inspection outlined that information is routinely shared.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care

provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC025712

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Together Trust

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

Responsible individual: Jill Sheldrake

Registered manager: Lillian Adamson

Inspector

Paul Robinson, social care inspector

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