

SC025713

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and/or have a special educational need and/or disabilities. The home is privately owned and managed.

At the time of the inspection, there were three children living in the home.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 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: 10 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/01/2023	Full	Good
15/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
16/10/2019	Full	Good
19/12/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children's needs are carefully considered by the manager before they move into the home. This ensures that the manager is confident that staff can meet the children's needs and prevent moves from the home. One child has experienced a high number of moves and changes but is developing a sense of security and trust in staff. When children struggle to settle into the home, staff listen to them and work hard to build relationships.

The home is furnished to meet the children's needs and their photos can be seen around the home. Children's bedrooms are personalised. However, there are some areas of the home that would benefit from being repainted.

All children attend education. When they find attendance difficult, staff work with them to identify barriers and offer encouragement and incentives to promote their learning. When children need additional support, staff advocate strongly for this to be implemented.

Children are sensitively supported to improve their health. All children are registered with local health services and have regular routine check-ups. Since moving into the home, one child has achieved a healthy weight and their emotional reliance on food has reduced.

Children's time with their family is supported, which gives them all a sense of identity. Staff understand the impact that family time can have on the children and they ensure that support is available before and after family time.

Children have access to a range of activities of their choice. All children regularly attend a group activity. This helps children to make friends, which in turn increases their confidence and self-esteem. These experiences and the children's achievements are captured in hardbound memory books.

Children contribute to their plans and understand their risk assessments. They are supported to develop their independence in line with their age and understanding.

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

Children can identify a trusted adult they can talk to about any worries or concerns. Children say that staff listen to them, take their concerns seriously and respond appropriately. One child's parent said: '[Name of child] is happy and safe at the home.'

When children go missing from home, staff respond in line with children's risk assessments. Staff work with other agencies to locate children and facilitate their safe return home. The manager reviews all incidents to consider how the number of

incidents can be reduced. One social worker said: 'Staff have been creative with strategies to minimise [name of child's] going missing from home and incidents have reduced.'

Children complete direct work with staff which is focused on developing their understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Staff use online resources and cover subjects including online safety, consent, racism and homophobia.

Safer recruitment practice is not sufficiently robust. There are a number of new staff working at the home. The relevant checks for one staff member have not been completed. The organisation has taken action to reduce the risk this potentially poses.

Risk assessments are clear and succinct and are understood by staff. Staff work proactively with the police to prevent children from becoming involved in the criminal justice system.

Staff have completed all mandatory training and training specific to the needs of the children in their care. However, staff have not completed training to ensure that they are equipped to respond to the risks that some children face.

When children need to be held, this is used as a last resort after de-escalation techniques have failed. Incidents are recorded and reviewed by the manager and the children and staff involved have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on incidents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by a permanent, experienced and qualified registered manager who is supported by the home's management team. The managers know children well and have a good understanding of their life experiences and how these impact on them.

There are sufficient staffing levels at the home and the manager is aware of the developmental needs of each staff member. There is always a member of the management team in the home, which ensures that there is good oversight of practice.

The manager has systems in place for reviewing staff practice. All incidents are reviewed to identify learning for staff. This has identified additional training for the staff team in a number of areas, including the updating of risk assessments. Management audits are not sufficiently robust to identify when local authority documentation is missing, which prevents this from being pursued with placing authorities.

Supervision takes place in line with the home's statement of purpose. Supervision follows an agenda which considers children's progress and staff practice and

development. It is an opportunity for staff to receive feedback from colleagues and children. One member of staff said: 'It's a chance to find out what I am doing well and what I need to improve on.'

The manager uses team meetings as an opportunity for staff learning; this includes personal behaviour support plans and autism training. Meetings are also used as an opportunity to strengthen the team and so staff have a shared vision.

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 care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(iii)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they receive all local authority documentation and plans.	31 March 2024
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that—	21 February 2024

full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.

The registered person may permit an individual to start work at the home despite the fact that the requirement in paragraph (3)(d) has not been met if—

the registered person ensures that the individual is appropriately supervised while carrying out the individual's duties, pending receipt of any outstanding information on the matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2, which is then considered satisfactory by the registered person.
(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d) (7)(d))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that all relevant checks, including international checks, are undertaken for all staff working in the home.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff undertake training specific to children's needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that the home maintains a clean and well-kept environment which supports children's physical, mental and emotional health. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)

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: SC025713

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: Deborah Hinett

Inspector

Sarah Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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