

SC025744

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 one of a number of homes operated by a voluntary organisation. It provides care for up to six children who may have social emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The home is managed by an experienced registered manager who has been in post since November 2015.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCIFF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 March 2022

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: 24 April 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/04/2019	Full	Outstanding
12/12/2018	Full	Outstanding
23/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
16/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress in relation to their starting points across aspects of their welfare and physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. Children enjoy good relationships with the adults who support them and have consistency and stability in their lives.

A social worker reported: 'The staff are really approachable and are very supportive. They have the best interests of the children at heart. I would most definitely place children again.'

Children are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician and have access to these services when they need them. Medical consent is obtained, and staff are familiar with the types of health decisions and responsibilities that are charged and delegated to them.

Staff ensure that children are routinely supported to have contact with their families. As a result, children sustain their familiar relationships with the people that are most important to them.

Staff promote the children's interests and hobbies. One child said: 'The staff ask me what I want to do, and they offer us activities.'

Most children attend school on a regular basis with the support and encouragement of staff. However, one child is currently excluded from school and is not receiving any form of education. A social worker said: 'I can't say that I am happy with his progress as he's being failed by education. However, the staff have done everything they can.'

Staff promote the development of the children's practical skills in shopping, cooking and budgeting. However, an eligible care leaver requires a pathway plan to promote their readiness for independence and adulthood.

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

Staff prioritise the safety and well-being of the children. The use of clear risk management plans and effective safe working practices promote the safety of the children. Risks associated with children are well known and understood by staff. Children are kept safe and feel safe. One child said: 'It's all right, to be honest. I can't think of anything that needs changing.'

Staff are trained in child protection and know how to report allegations of abuse and protect children from all forms of significant harm. Safeguarding incidents are reported to the appropriate authorities to ensure that children are supported and protected from harm. If children go missing from the home, staff actively look for

them and work closely with the police to secure their safe return. Staff maintain highly effective partnerships with the police and all other safeguarding agencies to promote the safety of the children. A social worker reported: 'The home always acts appropriately and keeps me informed. They report him missing when they need to and there is great communication.'

Staff consistently praise, acknowledge and reinforce the children's positive behaviour. They adopt a zero tolerance approach to bullying and talk to the children about unacceptable behaviours. Children are safer because of the actions staff take to support and protect them.

The use of sanctions is fair, balanced and proportionate. Restraint is rarely used, and if used at all, it is only ever used as a last resort to protect children from actual harm. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

The home provides children with a physically safe, appropriately secure, warm, comfortable and homely living environment. However, there have been issues with recent property damage and there are locks fitted to communal areas in the home, both of which detract from the otherwise homely environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Children benefit from a home that is managed efficiently and effectively. The home is managed by a well-qualified and experienced registered manager who demonstrates strong and effective leadership of staff and the day-to-day operations of the home.

The registered manager leads staff by example, and channels staff's efforts effectively. He ensures that staff are professionally supervised and are well supported, managed and led.

A stable, well-trained and qualified staff team is employed to meet the needs of the children at the home. Children benefit from well-planned, highly personalised care that promotes their needs effectively. However, not all staff are trained in the organisation's behaviour management model. As a result, the requirement from the last inspection is repeated to ensure that all staff are trained in this approach to meet the needs of the children effectively.

Staff meet the aims and objectives, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. They consistently provide a good quality service for the children that contributes to change and improvement in the children's lives.

Staff work in partnership with social workers, schools and other professional agencies to ensure that children benefit from the best possible help and all-round support. However, impact risk assessments fail to evidence the manager's discussions with the relevant professionals involved in the children's care prior to their admission to the home. This does not promote effective decision-making in terms of the suitability and compatibility of the children's placements.

Notice has been served on one child's placement due to his emerging vulnerabilities and the placing authority is looking for a suitable solo placement for the child. His social worker reported: 'It's just not quite the right placement.'

The performance of the home is scrutinised effectively. An independent person visits the home to review the quality of the children's care and the arrangements made to promote their safety and well-being.

The registered manager makes effective use of the home's monitoring activities to promote the home's continuing improvement. However, the manager's quality of care review does not reflect on stakeholder feedback or consider emerging patterns or trends in the home.

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 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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)) Specifically, that all staff are trained in the home's behaviour management model of practice.	27 June 2022
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and	4 April 2022

enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) This relates specifically to replacing the torn wallpaper on the landing and replacing the broken windows in the home.	
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children’s home’s premises; and any limitation placed on a child’s privacy or access to any area of the home’s premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)) This relates specifically to the removal of Yale locks to communal living areas.	9 May 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) This relates specifically to risk impact assessments, including the outcome of consultations held with relevant professionals to inform the home’s decision-making, including what contact was made with the child, social worker and previous carers, and consideration of the existing needs of other children at the home.	16 May 2022

The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)) This relates specifically to the improved content of the report, evaluation of patterns and trends and consideration of stakeholder feedback.	30 May 2022
---	--------------------

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when children are not participating in education because they have been excluded, staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that eligible care leavers have a pathway plan in place. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)

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: SC025744

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: Stephen Truelove

Inspector

Anthony Kyem, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022