

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC025744
Inspector	Stella Lovie
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	The Together Trust
Registered person address	The Together Trust Centre Schools Hill CHEADLE Cheshire SK8 1JE
Responsible individual	Jill Marie Bernadette Sheldrake
Registered manager	Lillian Violet Adamson
Date of last inspection	25/04/2014

Inspection date	26/03/2015
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

The home was last inspected in April 2014. It achieved an overall effectiveness judgement of good with the quality of care found to be outstanding. The improvement plan consisted of one requirement in relation to provision of regular supervision to staff. This has been met. Six recommendations to improve practice were made. All but one of these has been addressed at the point of this interim inspection. This demonstrates that the manager learns from inspection activity and amends practice accordingly.

Young people continue to enjoy a lovely home which is very warm and nurturing. They have positive and purposeful relationships with staff and with each other within their individual capabilities. They continue to achieve well. This is endorsed by feedback from young people and external professionals. There have undoubtedly been some challenging months around Christmas with staffing shortages due to sickness. The managers worked hard to minimise any adverse effects from this. As one social work team manager commented: 'Thanks to the home for all the support and young person focussed planning through some challenging times. There has been really good joint working between staff and the social worker. This has really assisted us.'

Young people have excellent opportunities to engage in activities that they enjoy and that support their overall development. Examples of such activities have included a sponsored cycle trip in France, a summer holiday in Cornwall and meals out with staff. This helps to give young people good memories of their time in the home and promotes their social skills.

Staff work in a non-judgemental way ensuring young people are respected as individuals. They are resilient and show a great deal of perseverance when managing young people's occasionally challenging and confrontational behaviour.

That said, some staff have not always followed the agreed positive behaviour strategies. Managers are aware of this and use staff meetings, role modelling and individual supervision to address such shortfalls when they occur.

A number of false allegations have been made against staff since the last inspection. These have been investigated thoroughly in line with policies and procedures and in full consultation with relevant agencies. This situation has understandably had an unsettling effect on staff but they have continued to provide a caring and kind service to all the young people. As one social worker commented: 'It's been absolutely brilliant for my young person. They manage her very complex needs exceptionally well. Their communication with me is really good.' In addition, the local authority designated officer confirms that as a placing authority they continue to have confidence and trust in the home.

The home is very comfortable and is furnished and maintained to a high standard. Since the last inspection there has been an impressive new kitchen installed. Young people were involved in the design and chose the tiles and flooring. This promotes their sense of well-being and ensures they feel valued.

The manager provides very effective and supportive leadership to the staff team, and demonstrates a strong commitment to driving forward improvements in the home. As another social worker commented: 'I chose this home because I liked the firm, consistent management style of the Registered Manager. I have a lot of respect for her. She has put in a lot of time with my young person. She has done things herself and is very much part of the teamwork there.'

Staff have benefitted from a wide range of training since the last inspection. This has included child sexual exploitation, administration of medication, advanced child development and first aid. This enables them to care effectively for the young people. Regular formal and informal supervision provides the opportunity for staff to discuss their work and the care and well-being of young people. Gaps still remain though in the supervision matrix in respect of signatures and in the detail about the length of time the session took. This is a minor shortfall that does not impact adversely in any way on the young people. Staff appraisals are completed annually. However, they still fail to take young people's views into account. This misses an important source of information to evaluate staff performance thoroughly. Robust internal and external arrangements for monitoring practice continues to ensure that there is effective oversight of the care that is given to young people and the progress they make.

To conclude, the home has gone through some challenging times recently but has continued to provide a good quality service to young people. This means it has sustained effectiveness. Three recommendations are made to improve practice further.

Information about this children's home

This home, one of a number of homes operated by a charitable organisation, provides care and accommodation for up to six children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/04/2014	Full	good
16/08/2013	Interim	good progress
17/05/2013	Full	good
27/09/2012	Interim	good progress

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that all staff understand and apply at all times the home's written policy on managing behaviour, with specific regard to supporting positive behaviour and maintaining agreed firm boundaries(NMS 3.3)
- ensure that the written record of supervision details the length of each supervision and is signed by the supervisor and the member of staff, including the supervision matrix where used (NMS 19.5)
- ensure that staff annual appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for. (NMS 19.6)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.