

SC025747

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run and managed by a charitable organisation. The home provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties and/or special educational needs.

The registered manager has been in post since November 2015.

Three children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 October 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	requires improvement to be 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: 20 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/02/2024	Full	Good
01/02/2023	Full	Good
12/01/2022	Full	Good
07/01/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

All the children attend education or have education provided to them in the home. Staff promote education and ensure that children are prepared with all the equipment that they will need. Staff advocate for children to ensure that they receive the most appropriate individual provision. When children have education, health and care plans, staff ensure that these are followed. Children's educational needs are prioritised.

Staff promote positive routines. Children help staff prepare the evening meal. Children and staff enjoy time together eating meals and spending time talking. Staff support children to take part in activities outside of the home, such as horse riding, walks in the countryside and feeding the ducks in the park. Children have predictable and safe routines.

Family time is promoted in line with children's care plans. A parent said, 'I feel happy with [name of child] living here. Staff keep me in touch with what is going on.' Parents are welcomed to the home and staff communicate well with them.

Staff are committed to their roles and say they love their jobs. There has been a lot of staff absence due to ill health. This has meant that some agency staff have been working in the home and therefore responses to children are not always consistent. This has an impact on the children, who have shown their distress through unwanted behaviour.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

There have been a significant number of incidents which have led to children being held to keep them safe. The records of the use of restraint do not always show that children have had the opportunity to talk about the incident afterwards. Children may not feel supported or listened to if they do not have the opportunity to talk about their experience of the incident.

Children say that, at times, they have felt unhappy because of other children's behaviour. There has been damage to the home, and although the home has been made safe, some of the repairs have not been carried out immediately. The damage is a reminder to children of difficult times.

Some external professionals said that they have not been informed of incidents in the home in a timely manner. This means that they have not been able to respond to and support the children as they would wish and as the child may need.

Risk assessments for children are completed and are updated whenever there is a change in the children's behaviour or an incident. However, it is not always clear if all staff have read and taken on board any changes in the risk assessments.

Since the last inspection there have been two medication errors. The manager informed the child's social care team and is confident that systems are now in place to ensure that errors do not happen again.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Despite the staff changes, the remaining staff say that they feel very supported by the manager and the deputy manager. One staff member said that they had been able to stay in work through some difficult times because of that support. The changes in staffing have meant that it has been difficult to maintain consistency for children.

Staff supervision and appraisals have been regular and supportive. Staff have regular team meetings. This has helped staff reflect on the children and how to support them. Staff and the managers are working hard to provide consistency to the children to enable them to feel safe and settled. This is a work in progress.

The manager ensures safe staff recruitment. Thorough vetting ensures that only suitable adults work with the children. New staff receive a good-quality induction. This provides a firm foundation for further learning. The staff are enthusiastic about offering good care to the children.

Most external professionals say that the manager communicates well. However, for one child, there is inconsistent communication between the manager and their wider professional team. This does not support good care practice.

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 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(h)) In particular, ensure that significant incidents are evaluated with scrutiny, taking into consideration any learning outcomes that can be implemented in children's risk management plans or to support the development of staff.	1 November 2024
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.	1 November 2024

(Regulation 35 (b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children are spoken to about the measure, and that their views are included.	
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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)) The provider must ensure that the children's individual risk management plans provide staff with clear strategies to manage and reduce risk. In addition, ensure that staff are consistent in their application of the strategies in place to manage children's behaviour. In addition, ensure that partner agencies are kept informed of significant incidents so that they can respond appropriately, in children's best interests.	1 November 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that children are able to experience living in a home that is homely, and that any repairs are made quickly. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC025747

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: Lillian Adamson

Inspector

Cathy Wilkins, Social Care Inspector

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