

SC025747

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home is registered to care for up to three children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities.

The registered manager has been in post since November 2015.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 January 2020

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: 23 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/10/2018	Full	Good
04/12/2017	Full	Good
22/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/10/2016	Full	Good

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— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b)). This is with particular reference to the accuracy of information in respect to the input from the organisation's clinical psychologist.	28/02/2020
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)) This is with particular reference to staff receiving training in relation to sexually harmful behaviours and learning disability.	31/07/2020

Recommendations

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b). ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraphs 13.2 and 13.3). This is with particular reference to supervision of the assistant manager and regular bank staff.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people receive warm and nurturing care from all staff within the home. Young people and staff quickly build positive relationships. As a result young people have a sense of belonging and acceptance from the adults who are caring for them.

Young people make good progress from their starting points on admission to the home. This progress is driven by staff who know young people and understand them really well.

All young people are in full-time education. Attendance and engagement with learning are good. Young people are supported to learn informally outside of school through reading and discussion with staff. Young people are members of the local library. The proactive culture around learning, in its broadest sense, supports young people's development.

One young person was not in education on arrival at the home. Staff were persistent in their attempts to ensure that an educational place was found. The young person received a timetable of structured educational activity during this time. As a result of this work by the staff the young person was supported back into formal education. It was a recommendation of the last inspection that staff increased their knowledge in respect of young people's educational targets. This recommendation is met.

Two young people have joined the home since the last inspection. Both young people told the inspector that they visited the home prior to their admission. They were able to stay for meals and some overnight stays. As a result of this, both young people were less anxious about their move and had a positive transition.

Young people spend time with their families on a regular basis. Family members come to the home. Staff also support young people and their families to take part in community activities. One grandparent said, 'The home is very welcoming to us. It is like a big family.' This inclusive approach to families means that young people are able to develop and maintain their important family relationships. Their sense of identity and belonging is well promoted.

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

Young people's well-being is supported by staff who have a good understanding of strengths and risks. Risk assessments are comprehensive and regularly reviewed and followed in practice. Placement plans reflect the individual needs of each young person. The recommendation made at the last inspection in respect of improvements in the recording of placement planning is met.

There is good communication between the home, social workers and other professionals involved with young people. In one example, the home had worked closely with the local

authority to address the high number of allegations being made by one young person. A clear and comprehensive allegations management plan was put in place. As a result, the response to allegations was managed more appropriately by professionals while keeping the young person safe.

Young people are aware of how to make a complaint. The complaints procedure has been used by young people since the last inspection. Staff have addressed the concerns raised by young people and provided them with appropriate feedback. As a result, young people feel that their opinions are valued.

The home works closely with a specialist service for young people who have demonstrated inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviours. This good joint working means that young people are receiving the help they need to understand and manage their sexual behaviour.

Young people are rarely restrained. One restraint has taken place since the last inspection. This was proportionate to the situation. Restraint records are thorough and supported by an evaluation by the registered manager. The minimal use of physical intervention helps young people's relationships with the adults caring for them. It also protects them from the potential emotional and physical impact of such interventions.

Monetary sanctions are used to compensate for damage in the home. Young people give a proportion of weekly pocket money to repair or replace items. This has been not been effective in changing the behaviours of the young people involved. The registered manager's evaluation of these type of sanctions has more recently acknowledged the ineffectiveness of these consequences. As a result, staff are reflecting on alternate strategies which have a more direct impact on young people's sense of personal responsibility.

Young people do not go missing from the home. Young people are therefore not experiencing the disruption caused by the intermittent absence of their peers. A result of this is that the stability of the home is promoted and relationships between young people become stronger.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home continues to be led by an experienced registered manager who has been in post for a number of years. The manager is also registered for another of the organisation's homes. These dual responsibilities do not have a detrimental impact on the home.

There have been significant changes in the staff team since the last inspection. Six members of staff have left and there are currently three vacancies in the staff team. The assistant manager has recently been promoted from the role of senior in the home. She is still developing in this role. Additional leadership and management support is provided by a qualified and experienced assistant manager from the manager's other home. As a result there is good management oversight.

On the whole, staff receive regular supervision, which is of a good quality. Regular bank staff are not being offered supervision that adequately reflects their current contribution to the care of young people. Supervision records indicate that the sessions are not sufficiently child-focused. As a result of these omissions, staff are not being supported effectively through supervision to ensure that they fully understand the needs of young people and are able to meet these needs.

New staff have a well-planned induction to the home. There is an appropriate balance of formal training and practical experience offered. Staff in their probationary period have structured probationary reviews in addition to their supervision. As a result of this programme, new staff are well supported to develop their practice.

Staff undertake a range of training through the wider organisation. There is a clear record of training undertaken and when further training is needed and there is effective management oversight of the training programme. Established staff have had specialist training in relation to sexually harmful behaviours. There are currently no arrangements in place for new staff to undertake such training. No staff receive training in relation to caring for young people with learning disabilities. As a result of this lack of training, staff are not being provided with the core knowledge and skills in relation to the young people placed at the home, all of whom have an additional learning need and needs in relation to their sexual behaviour.

The statement of purpose does not accurately reflect the relationship between the home and the organisation's clinical psychologist. It details a much greater input to the home than is the case in practice. As a result of this discrepancy, young people, families and commissioners are being provided with inaccurate written information in relation to the therapeutic service provided by the home.

The physical environment of the home is warm and welcoming. Communal areas are decorated with photographs of young people and staff. Young people's bedrooms reflect their individual personalities and interests. This means that young people's daily experience is that of any young person living in a caring family environment.

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: SC025747

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

Dawn Parton, social care inspector

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