

SC025747

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run and managed by a charitable organisation. The home provides care for up to three children. The provider states in its statement of purpose that care is provided for children with sexually harmful behaviours.

The registered manager 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 SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 January 2022

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: 7 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/01/2020	Full	Good
23/10/2018	Full	Good
04/12/2017	Full	Good
22/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide children with a caring, supportive and nurturing environment. Children make good progress in relation to their starting points across aspects of their welfare, physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. Children benefit from continuity of care and have stability and consistency in their lives.

Children enjoy warm and secure relationships with staff and sustain their positive attachments. Staff provide children with high-quality support that contributes to change and improvement in their lives.

One child told the inspector, 'I'm happy here. The staff are good listeners. I get on well with staff most of the time. It was hard at first, but now I really enjoy it here.'

Children attend college on a regular basis, and staff support their learning and educational progress. They help children to complete their homework regularly at the home. A child said, 'It's good because it's easy for me to get to college.'

One child works part time at a local charity shop. Another child sells football programmes for his local football team, which he thoroughly enjoys. Children develop their practical skills in cooking, shopping and budgeting. However, not all eligible care leavers have pathway plans to prepare them for independence and adulthood.

A social worker said, 'They are very pro-active in promoting independence, and together we have worked on a plan for increasing my child's independence, which includes taking positive risks.'

Children enjoy positive activities such as swimming, football, cricket and hockey. Staff promote the children's interests and hobbies. Children are supported to spend time with their families. As a result, they sustain their close relationships with the people that are most important to them.

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

The safety of the children is always at the centre of staff practice. Children are kept safe and feel safe. Staff have a good understanding of the needs and vulnerabilities of the children and take appropriate action to address them. The use of clear risk assessments and safe working practices promote the children's safety.

The home has a zero tolerance approach towards bullying. Children are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour through mediation and one-to-one discussions with the staff. The use of sanctions to manage negative behaviour is fair, balanced and proportionate.

A specialist worker reported, '[child's name] has made great progress in both his emotional awareness and his ability to manage his emotions to show greater flexibility of thought and resolve difficulties.'

Children rarely go missing from the home and, on the rare occasions that they do, staff take appropriate action to secure their safe return. Staff work with the local police and other safeguarding agencies to promote the safety and well-being of the children.

There are no issues with children offending, using drugs or alcohol. Staff actively promote positive behaviour. They apply the home's rules and boundaries consistently to ensure that children are safe. Staff manage children's behaviours well.

Deprivation of liberty safeguards are in place. This means that the staff can lock external doors to the home to promote the safety of the children. However, on rare occasions, internal doors to communal areas have been locked to minimise the impact of disruptive behaviour. This practice is not kept under regular review. As a result, a recommendation is made in respect of this issue.

Health and safety matters are addressed effectively to ensure that the environment is safe for children, staff and visitors to the home. The home provides children with a physically safe, appropriately secure, comfortable and homely living environment. However, the carpet in the hall, stairs and landing area is looking worn. Therefore, a new replacement carpet needed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Children benefit from a home that is managed efficiently and effectively. The manager is suitably qualified and experienced and exercises strong and effective leadership of the operations of the home. The manager leads staff by example and channels staff's efforts effectively.

The manager and staff team meet the aims and objectives, as set out, in the home's statement of purpose. The manager provides a good-quality service for the children. The manager has addressed and met the two requirements and the recommendation from the last inspection. Staff are well trained, and most are suitably qualified. Staff are well supported by leaders and managers and benefit from regular practice-related supervision.

Staff are trained to meet the specific needs of the children. Staff have completed training in caring for children with learning disabilities and sexually harmful behaviour. Refresher training for supporting children who display sexually harmful behaviour is also planned for staff to attend this month.

Staff prioritise the needs of the children. They work in partnership with social workers and other specialist services to ensure that children benefit from the best possible help and all-round support. A social worker said, 'Staff show that they care

about the children. They are always polite, willing and eager to help when supporting the children.'

The home is visited each month by an independent professional to review the standard and quality of the children's care. This, combined with the registered manager's own internal monitoring activities, means there are effective systems to secure the home's continued improvement.

The manager has completed a detailed and comprehensive quality of care review that covers the last six months. However, the report is descriptive and lacks evaluation. The report does not reflect on any stakeholder feedback or address emerging patterns or trends. A requirement is made in relation to this issue.

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 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 improving the content of the report, evaluation of patterns and trends, and consideration of stakeholder feedback.	31 March 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children have access to all shared areas of their home, unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the children homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that the carpet in the hall, stairs and landing area is replaced to ensure that the children live in a well-maintained home. ('Guide to the children homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- The registered person should ensure that, in order to support children to be prepared for living independently, a pathway plan is obtained for all eligible children. ('Guide to the children homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27, page 17)

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

Anthony Kyem, Social Care Inspector

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