

SC025747

Registered provider: 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.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 August 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be 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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 1 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/10/2024	Full	Good
20/02/2024	Full	Good
01/02/2023	Full	Good
12/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

There is one child living in the home who spoke to the inspector during the inspection. The child told the inspector that they 'get on with most staff'.

When children move on and when these arrangements are made in an emergency, the staff team ensures that children are supported. One child who no longer lives in the home spoke to the inspector and described the staff team as being supportive and available to them since they have moved on from the home.

The child currently living in the home engaged in tutor sessions both at home and in the community. However, progress has been hampered and the child's participation has varied. There is no plan in place for the child's education for the start of the new term. The manager has escalated these concerns with the child's placing authority.

Staff are proactive at seeking appropriate medical advice and guidance when the child has minor health complaints. Staff ensure that the child takes prescribed medication and support the child with follow-up appointments following periods of ill health.

Staff take the child to visit family and friends, irrespective of the distance. Family time arrangements are jointly assessed in partnership with the child's social worker, to ensure that there are agreed plans in place to keep the child safe.

Staff support the child with their interests including taking the child fishing and to look at aeroplanes. The child was looking forward to celebrating their upcoming birthday at home with staff and family.

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

The manager implements risk management plans that are regularly reviewed and which provide staff with clear guidance and strategies to care for children. However, there has been one occasion when two children have entered one another's bedrooms and a serious incident occurred.

Staff have not always used effective de-escalation techniques when children have felt upset and frustrated, nor have staff used empathy and sensitivity to help a child co-regulate. This does not provide children with a positive message that staff have the confidence or skill set to support children when they are feeling at their most vulnerable.

When children make allegations, leaders and managers generally share the concerns with appropriate agencies, including the local authority designated officer, in accordance

with statutory guidance. However, on one occasion, the correct reporting procedures were not followed.

When physical intervention has been necessary for one child to keep them safe, the child has not always been provided with a debrief following the incident. The child living in the home knows how to make a complaint, and felt confident that should they raise a concern this would be handled quickly by the registered manager.

Safer recruitment practice takes place. Leaders and managers ensure that newly appointed staff take part in a thorough vetting process so that the child is cared for by staff who will prioritise the child's safety and well-being.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager acknowledged that, since the last inspection, there has been inconsistency in staffing, which has led to inconsistency in outcomes for children. The manager has addressed these shortfalls and is confident that the staff working in the home are suitably skilled and qualified to meet the needs of the child living in the home.

The home environment is clean and tidy and well furnished. However, during the visit, a window restrictor required readjusting in the child's bedroom. Additionally, electrical cables located at the front of the house were not secured and could have caused a serious injury. A requirement has been raised. These tasks were actioned by the manager during the inspection.

Staff who are new to the home were spoken to during the inspection. They confirmed that they have received an induction process and have access to training to equip them to carry out their job confidently. Staff spoke positively about equality and diversity and that this is being promoted in a meaningful way during team meetings and in general.

Supervision takes place regularly and provides staff with the opportunity to discuss practice issues as well as any personal issues. Staff were familiar with the company whistle-blowing procedure and felt confident that, should they have a concern, this would be managed quickly and confidentially.

The independent visitor makes regular visits to the home. However, one report had not been sent to HMCI within the statutory timescales. The manager actioned this during the inspection.

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 protection of children standard 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; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health; and (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(c)(d)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff use effective de-escalation techniques in line with the children's specific plans so that children are kept safe. In addition, the registered person must ensure that the home is free from hazards that could cause potential harm to a child.	21 September 2025

This specifically relates to unsecured electrical cables at the front of the property, and a window restrictor in the child's bedroom which required adjustment.	
Notification of a serious event The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; (Regulation 40 (4)(b))	21 September 2025
Behaviour management policies and records The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. 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. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children are provided with consistent and effective debriefs following a significant incident.	21 September 2025

Independent person: visits and reports The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI; the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager. (Regulation 44 (1) (7)(a)(d)) Specifically, the registered person should ensure that the report is sent to HMCI within the statutory timescales.	21 September 2025
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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 address: Together Trust Centre, Schools Hill, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 1JE

Responsible individual: Sara Bayley

Registered manager: Lillian Adamson

Inspector

Michelle Greenhalgh, Social Care Inspector

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