

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 special educational needs.

The registered manager has been in post since November 2015.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 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	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: 1 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2023	Full	Good
12/01/2022	Full	Good
07/01/2020	Full	Good
23/10/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, there were two children living in the home. When children move into the home, the manager ensures that the most appropriate planning takes place. As a result of this, children are sensitively welcomed, and this helps to ease any anxieties they may have.

When children are ready to move on from the home, staff help them to prepare for this. Since the last inspection, one child has successfully returned home to live with their family. Staff celebrated this with the child by providing them with a leaving party and gifts. As a result of this, the child experienced a positive ending and was able to say appropriate goodbyes.

The home environment is warm and welcoming, and there are lots of photos of the children around the home. Children have the freedom to personalise their bedrooms. One child said, 'I really like my bedroom. I love the colour. I chose it myself.' This helps children to develop a sense of belonging.

Staff are warm, nurturing and caring towards children. They spend time with them and know them well. The practice observed throughout the inspection was very positive.

Staff promote and support children to do well in education. All children enjoy and fully engage with their education. Attendance is high, and children are making progress from their starting points. When there are barriers to education, staff work collaboratively to help children overcome them.

There have been occasions when some children have struggled with their mental health and well-being. The staff and manager have ensured that appropriate referrals are made to external agencies to seek additional support. As a result, children are receiving specialist help that is individualised to their needs.

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

The manager and staff know the children's risks and understand them. The manager ensures that risk management plans are individualised and up to date. When children display risk-taking behaviours, records are detailed, and it is clear what action staff have taken to manage the behaviour and minimise risk. Staff carry out direct work with children following incidents. However, this is not always consistent.

Children can identify a trusted adult that they can talk to about any worries or concerns they may have. Children know how to make a complaint and can identify who to complain to if they ever have any concerns.

There have been occasions when children have displayed self-injurious behaviour. Records of these incidents are detailed and evidence what steps staff have taken to support children when in crisis. The manager ensures that effective liaison takes place with relevant professionals to ensure that the most appropriate safety plans and support are implemented. As a result, children are helped to stay safe, and their risks are reducing. One professional said, 'They are responsive, keep all professionals involved. I get regular updates. They are always available.'

Holding a child to keep them safe is used as a last resort. Records are detailed and contain relevant information. Appropriate debriefs are completed with children and staff. The manager reviews all records and identifies learning. As a result of this, incidents involving restraint have been significantly reduced. However, the manager does not always fully consider the use of restraint and its duration, and it is not always clear if the manager has spoken to the child.

Investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are shared with the appropriate agencies. They are handled fairly, quickly and in line with statutory guidance. Record-keeping in relation to allegation management has significantly improved. However, there is sometimes a delay in submitting safeguarding notifications to Ofsted.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager leads by example. She is confident and ambitious for children. An experienced assistant manager supports her. Equally, they each have high expectations for the staff team, their development and the care for children.

When new staff are recruited, their induction to the home is effective. They complete mandatory training and several shadow shifts before they start their role. However, not all staff complete additional specialist training as specified in the home's statement of purpose.

The home is staffed and resourced to meet the needs of the children. The staff team is stable and consistent. This means children receive continuity of care, and they are able to build secure relationships with staff.

Staff receive regular supervision. The supervision sessions are well planned and structured and are led by a suitably experienced manager or leader. The supervision sessions are reflective and provide a safe environment for staff to reflect on their practice and development. Staff find these valuable and supportive.

The manager completes a regular quality of care review, where she critically analyses the care provided. This is detailed and extensive, and there is evidence of consultation with children and professionals in the report. The home is also visited monthly by an independent person who produces a report. However, there are occasions when the report from the independent person is inaccurate.

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

Statutory requirement

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 ensure that— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; 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 (3)(vi)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that when incidents of restraint are reviewed, the use and effectiveness of the measure, including the duration, are fully considered. Additionally, the registered provider must ensure that when children have been spoken to following the use of restraint, this is clearly evidenced in the records.	22 March 2024

Recommendations

- The registered provider should ensure that when new staff are recruited, they complete specialist training as part of their induction, specifically in relation to harmful sexual behaviour. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that there is a system in place so that all serious events are notified to the regulator without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)

- The registered person should ensure that direct work is carried out with children following all incidents where children have displayed risk-taking behaviours. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards'. Page 43, 9.9)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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

Kimmy Feeley, Social Care Inspector

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