

# 1232650

Registered provider: Friends Together Care Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The children's home is owned and managed by a sole provider. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 15 to 16 August 2017

**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:** 2 May 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Inadequate

## **Enforcement action since last inspection**

A restriction notice and notice of proposal to cancel the home's registration were issued following the last full inspection. A monitoring visit, undertaken on 9 June 2017, identified improvements had been made, particularly in safeguarding practices. The restriction was no longer needed and both notices were lifted.

## **Key findings from this inspection**

This children's home is good because:

- Young people receive good-quality care from the nurturing staff team.
- Young people lead a healthier lifestyle. They have increased their engagement in physical activities and have adopted better eating habits.
- Improved policies, procedures and recording have resulted in staff feeling more confident. There is safer and more consistent staff practice.
- There is good risk management with scrutiny from an external consultant and an independent visitor.
- Staff receive training and professional development that result in continuity of care for young people.
- The staff speak positively about the changes made at the home, including the appointment of the new manager.
- The behaviour of young people has improved, resulting in fewer missing-from-home episodes, and self-harming behaviours have lessened.

The children's home's areas for development:

- A young person has been without an education provision for many months and the same local authority did not complete a return to home interview in a timely fashion. The staff need to know when to escalate concerns if the placing authority is not working in the child's best interests.
- There is no clear plan for the induction of new staff into the home, particularly with regard to timescales for when new staff will receive mandatory training.
- As there have been incidents of young people from a neighbouring children's home associating with resident young people, including causing complaints from neighbours, this needs to be included within the locality risk assessment.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/05/2017	Full	Inadequate
17/01/2017	Full	Inadequate

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

## Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least once every six months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review, the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the quality of care provided for children; and</li> <li>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it.</li> </ul> <p>The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(1)(2)(a)(b)(5))</p>	20/08/2017
<p>If the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(c))</p> <p>This is particularly in respect of escalating concerns if the placing authority is not working in the child's best interests, for example not meeting young people's educational needs and not visiting for return to home interviews. Consideration should be given to compiling an escalation policy to provide timescales for escalating concerns.</p>	31/10/2017

## Recommendations

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications). ('Guide the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

- When establishing the home, the registered person must ensure that it is suitably located so that children are effectively safeguarded and can access services to meet needs identified in their relevant plans (see regulations 12(2)(c)). Under regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

Specifically, to make the locality risk assessment more localised, particularly in respect of the other children's homes in the local area and any other areas where young people may congregate.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Young people continue to have good, trusting relationships with the nurturing staff team. Young people are relaxed and spend time talking to staff. Key working and informal discussions provide staff with opportunities to educate young people about issues that affect their lives. Young people become more open and honest and can talk to staff about sensitive issues. Young people benefit from improved emotional well-being and increased self-esteem and confidence. Young people who have left the home remain in contact due to the relationships built with the staff team. This helps them settle in their new homes.

Young people now have structure and routine to their day. Weekly planners devised with staff support and help young people organise their time well. They are kept busy, are not bored, and, as a result, young people benefit from better sleep patterns.

For those not in education, employment or training, staff provide informal educational opportunities throughout the week, and encourage young people to look for voluntary work. Because of the encouragement from staff, young people become motivated to seek training and employment. Staff consult and meet with social workers and the virtual head. These professionals are persistent in pursuing educational placements for young people, but one young person has not been in education for several months. Staff's concerns have not been escalated and brought to the attention of senior managers following a poor response from the placing authority.

Young people are engaging in routine medical examinations and for one young person their vaccinations are now up to date. This offers protection from diseases and encourages young people to establish good health habits. In addition, young people eat more healthily; engage in physical activities, for example swimming, and visits to the gym. This results in them leading a healthier lifestyle.

Young people fully participate in the home's independence living plan. They undertake daily living tasks and staff support them to budget their money. One young person has

learned to cook. They enjoy sharing their home-cooked meals with staff. A young person has begun saving money in a bank account, has a provisional driving licence, and is applying for a passport to go on an overseas holiday with staff. Young people are prepared and provided with the necessary skills for when they leave the home to live independently.

Parts of the home have benefited from redecoration and, with ideas from the young people, now look fresher and brighter. All repairs highlighted at the last inspection have been made and each bedroom has an individual lock for privacy. Young people speak of enjoying living at the home, and are more involved in its day-to-day running. One young person helped to decorate their bedroom, which is now more age-appropriate and is personalised to reflect their taste. One young person said: 'I like it here. It is homely and not like a care home.'

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

Young people feel safe in the home and have adults they can confide in about their private lives. The improved safeguarding processes and systems for staff to follow further contribute to young people's safety. There is better recording of information about incidents and staff review the detailed risk assessments on a monthly basis, or following newly identified concerns. Staff are more confident about recognising potential risks to young people, and look at ways of reducing these. They also educate young people about the dangers, for example a young person taking an electrical item into the bathroom. A professional said: 'Things are much improved. There has been a great improvement in the processes, particularly safeguarding.'

Staff are clearer about when to notify the regulator following any significant incident. They follow young people's individualised missing-from-care procedures. Bedroom door alarms have been fitted for use when it may be appropriate to monitor exit from and entry to a young person's bedroom. This provides additional support should young people require this to keep them safe. Staff educate young people about the dangers of absconding. They have begun to recognise the risks that relate to being out late and consequently missing-from-home episodes have significantly reduced. This is leading to a reduction in the risk of child sexual exploitation and offending behaviour.

Staff have improved their monitoring and management of young people's substance misuse. This includes associated concerns such as drug debt and offending behaviour. Consequently, there is a reduction in young people's substance misuse. Young people are now more open with staff about how they are feeling. As a result, self-harming behaviours have lessened. There has been an increase in positive behaviour and staff do not have to restrain young people.

Although there have been no young people recently admitted to the home, the manager has developed a new impact risk assessment. This was tested with a recent referral during which the manager obtained detailed information about the young person and considered the young person's needs and whether there would be an impact on the current resident. The manager envisages that when there are new admissions in the

future, this will help to reduce disruption in the future.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Since the last inspection, managers have made positive changes with improved policies, procedures, systems and paperwork. This has resulted in safer and more consistent staff practices.

The manager is not yet registered with the regulator although the application for registration has now been submitted. The management team members are clear about their individual responsibilities to provide structure and clarity for staff. One staff member said: 'Since [name of manager] has come on board it has had a massive impact on everyone. Staff work really well together. We are now doing everything as it needs to be done. We are now a good, strong team.'

Staff speak of improved morale and of enjoying working at the home, and they now consider themselves a cohesive staff team. Staff speak positively about the changes that have been made at the home, and are feeling more confident and ready for any new young people who are admitted to the home. One said: 'We have made huge progress. We are all committed and pulling together. It seems to be flowing what we need to do.'

A consultancy agency continues to provide training to staff and regular auditing of the systems. Staff continue to work through the intensive package of training alongside other e-learning opportunities. The training provider also offers ongoing competence testing of staff, particularly in respect of safeguarding scenarios. This ensures that staff receive up-to-date training that promotes continuity of care for young people.

Managers have updated the recruitment policy and procedures to ensure safer recruitment of staff. As there have been no new members of staff, new recruitment procedures are untested. Documents indicate that new staff will have a proper induction together with attending the same training and development opportunities as existing staff. The compilation of a workforce development plan will provide clarity around timescales for staff to complete their inductions, probation periods and training.

Staff rotas have changed, providing time for staff to complete a proper handover before going off shift. A higher frequency of team meetings, together with regular, better-quality staff supervision, helps the staff team to become more reflective about their practice.

Concerns relating to staff conduct and actions are dealt with effectively and promptly. If necessary, additional training and extra supervision take place to improve practice. This ensures that staff are competent and confident in providing safe care.

The management team has developed professional relationships with external agencies such as the police and the designated officer. There are improved relationships with stakeholders and weekly reports provide the placing authority with up-to-date information about young people. The management team consults and seeks feedback from young people, family members and professionals about the impact that staff care is

having on young people's care and progress. This also informs managers about how to develop the home further to ensure continued good-quality care.

The requirements from the previous inspection have been met. A review of the quality of care is still to be completed, but is within timescales set at the last inspection and will be carried forward.

A thorough monthly review of the home is undertaken by an independent visitor. This provides additional scrutiny of the home and an independent opinion about whether young people are safeguarded. There are now improved relationships with neighbours. A locality assessment details community risks to the young people. However, this would be enhanced through adding more localised risks, such as the nearby children's home whose residents have previously congregated outside the home causing neighbourhood complaints.

## **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 difference 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 who 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:** 1232650

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Friends Together Care Homes Ltd

**Registered provider address:** 7 Tenter Lane, Warmsworth, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 9PP

**Responsible individual:** Thomas Worthington

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Tina Ruffles: social care inspector

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