

1254843

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated under trust arrangements to accommodate up to six children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The manager is suitably qualified and experienced for the position held.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 October 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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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	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 24 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/09/2017	Full	Outstanding

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

Recommendations

- Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The home is well presented and maintained both internally and externally. The home is warm and inviting, creating a calming and relaxing environment. The staff team, children and young people take pride in their home. Subsequently, damage has been minimal. The registered manager continually looks for ways to develop the aesthetics of the home and there are further developments for a new kitchen and decking area outside.

Children and young people that live in this home develop excellent relationships with the adults who care for them. The staff team members know the young people very well and this helps them to provide individualised care. Children and young people spoken to say that they feel happy and safe in their home and that they trust the adults who care for them.

From their starting points, some children and young people have made outstanding progress. The staff team understands the benefits of engaging with wider systems and family members to provide the best possible care to children and young people. The staff team uses innovative and creative ways to match children's and young people's interests to educational activities and this encourages them to engage with education.

The registered manager and the staff team are excellent advocates for all the children and young people. One young person recently admitted to the home has had some anxieties about returning to education after a significant period of school refusal. This was prior to her admission to the home. The registered manager has been pivotal in the arrangements for an alternative educational placement and the review of that young person's educational plan. Her care plan did not explicitly detail a plan should she further refuse education. This would help children and young people to understand how they will be supported through their transition back into education.

There is firm evidence of children and young people developing independent skills that

prepare them for being adults. Children's and young people's progress is recognised and rewarded with individual incentives.

The children and young people are provided with opportunities to engage in activities and trips. Some children and young people enjoyed attending the tall ships, while others enjoyed an overseas trip during the summer holidays. The staff team members have a wide variety of appropriate skills and experience, which add value and enhance opportunity. There are hens, peacocks and other animals kept to the rear of the property. Some children and young people enjoy helping with the care of the animals.

There is an excellent ethos in the home to celebrate and embrace diversity. This helps children and young people to be accepting and tolerant of differences. The deputy manager is currently developing a project with a local organisation that will provide opportunities for adults with learning difficulties to assist with the care of the animals and other aspects to maintaining the grounds of the home. One young person will be central to help develop a sensory room that will go alongside the development. There are other charitable events that provide children and young people with opportunities to enjoy and achieve while making a positive contribution.

There is very good evidence of children and young people contributing to their care. House meetings take place and the registered manager responds to the requests of children and young people. Care plans are written in a way that is likely to be helpful to children and young people in understanding how they will be cared for by the adults who look after them.

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

Risk assessment and risk management processes are of an excellent quality. The staff have received specific training around self-harm, suicide and county lines. This equips the staff team members with the skills and knowledge that they require to understand wider safeguarding concerns and to plan, review and manage risks more effectively.

The registered manager and the staff team are intuitive. They know the children and young people exceptionally well and identify potential risks and triggers. Plans to reduce these risks are detailed and highly effective. Formulation plans are developed to help staff understand the influences and experiences of children and young people, both past and present. The staff utilise the input of a clinical psychologist. This helps them to understand underlying factors and presenting behaviours.

Behaviour management is good. Restraints have not happened since 2016. Bullying has not been an issue and the home has received a platinum award from the anti-bullying team. Missing from home episodes have significantly reduced. Where there have been episodes of going missing, the staff team has followed the missing from home protocol and has been proactive in ensuring the safe return of children and young people.

The staff team members encourage children's and young people's development by balancing their interventions between keeping children and young people safe and

recognising that children and young people need to take measured risks in order to develop appropriate skills.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is passionate and inspirational. He is supported in his role by an effective deputy manager and a committed staff team. The staff team members are stable and they draw on each other's strengths. The registered manager creates a culture in the home that places children and young people at the centre of everything that they do. The staff team shares his passion for achieving the best outcomes for children and young people.

The staff team receives regular supervisions and appraisals. There are regular team meetings where safeguarding issues are also discussed. This enables the staff team to have a consistent approach to helping and protecting children and young people. The registered manager promotes opportunities for healthy debates and constantly looks for new ways to help develop practice and learning. His staff team respects him and feels well supported and motivated as a result.

The manager and staff strive relentlessly to promote positive outcomes for children and young people, while developing children's and young people's self-esteem and confidence and ensuring that they are more resilient in the future. The registered manager and staff team are very much respected by a range of professionals. Comments from professionals include, 'They go above and beyond' and 'They are exemplary.' One professional said, 'They are just so passionate about what they do. I've never come across such a strong team. They all know the young people inside out and the relationships that they build are fantastic. This sets the foundations that help them to go on and make fantastic progress for the young people.'

The registered manager as well as the staff team show great insight into the home's strengths as well as areas that could be improved. They are not complacent, and they are effective at driving improvements forward.

Practice in the home is very much based on evidence-based research and reflective practice. Staff apply the models Team Teach and Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (PACE). In addition, they use the therapeutic model 'Holding the Space'. This means that children and young people receive safe and consistent care that is effective at helping them to make progress in all aspects of their lives.

There is an effective monitoring system in place that measures the progress of children and young people every month. Information is then evaluated within a monthly report and shared with relevant professionals, parents, children and young people. This helps children, young people and their families to see where they are making excellent progress.

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: 1254843

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland Limited

Registered provider address: Civic Centre, Burdon Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear
SR2 7DN

Responsible individual: Catherine Witt

Registered manager: Graeme Conley

Inspector

Jacqueline Tate: social care inspector

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