

# 1254835

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to six children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is provided by a limited company. The registered manager has considerable experience and is suitably qualified for the position held.

**Inspection dates:** 2 to 3 July 2019

**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:** 26 June 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/06/2018	Full	Good
12/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
08/11/2017	Full	Good

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

### Recommendations

- Sufficient staff means a home having enough suitably trained staff (including someone in a management role) on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children in the home, and that those staff are able to respond to emergency placements, where accepted. The registered person must demonstrate every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring that the employment of any temporary staff will not prevent children from receiving the continuity of care that they need (Regulation 31 (1)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)

In particular, that all staff, including relief staff, undertake mandatory training and any additional training identified by the manager.

### Inspection judgements

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

Children and young people receive a very good standard of care. Comprehensive care plans and risk assessments reflect how children and young people will be supported and protected. They are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they remain relevant to each child and young person. This means that children and young people receive appropriate care relevant to their needs. The children and young people are making good progress taking into account their starting points.

Admissions to the home are well planned. Impact risk assessments consider the needs of all children and young people to ensure that the mix of the group has minimal disruption. Children and young people are sensitively welcomed into the home. This enables them to settle quickly. There have been two young people who have recently transitioned to semi-independent accommodation. Both moves were well planned to ensure that both young people had a positive experience.

Memory boxes and photographs help to capture the experiences and achievements of the children and young people. The registered manager has recently developed an electronic link that can be accessed from mobile phones or tablets. The link enables children and young people to access their photographs and memories as they wish. The link will also enable those memories to be accessed as children and young people grow and become adults.

Children and young people are very well consulted. House meetings, key-working sessions, post box and electronic surveys are just a few ways that children and young

people can express their views. The electronic system developed by the registered manager has been effective at ascertaining children's and young people's views about life in the home. The wishes and feelings of children and young people are given significant consideration within staff team meetings. This means that children and young people feel listened to in relation to how they wish to be cared for.

Children and young people can access a range of activities. They are planned in line with each child's and young person's preference. A young person commented, 'I love doing activities. I've been all over. I like it because we get to spend time with the staff. We can just say where we would like to go, and the staff sort it out.'

There is a good ethos to education and to children and young people achieving. For those children and young people who refuse to attend their educational provision, alternative educational activities are offered. Since the last inspection, the registered manager has developed a learning space on-site. The children and young people helped to develop the learning space known as the Hogwarts room with a Harry Potter theme. Furthermore, the registered manager has plans to register with ASDAN the curriculum development organisation and awarding body. The aim is to provide courses that develop skills for learning, work and life, ensuring that children and young people benefit from a wide range of education resources.

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

There is a good safeguarding culture within the home. Safeguarding is included as a standard agenda item within team meetings and within staff supervisions. Safeguarding topics are also discussed within the children's and young people's house meetings as well as in individual key-working sessions. This means that safeguarding is at the forefront of thinking and practice.

When there have been significant safeguarding incidents, the correct procedures have been followed. The staff team follows individual risk assessments to manage risks effectively. When children and young people have been missing from the home, the staff team has been proactive in aiding the safe return of children and young people. An emphasis is given to return home interviews with an independent visitor. This means that children and young people benefit from talking to someone independent of the home.

Behaviour management in the home is good. Low-level disruptive behaviour is managed effectively without the need to use sanctions. Children and young people have very positive relationships with the adults who care for them and they are able to discuss their worries and concerns. There has been a reduction in critical incidents for some children and young people. This means that children and young people are benefiting from the support that is provided by the adults who care for them.

The home has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. The proactive approach to bullying means that children and young people have an awareness of the signs of bullying and its effect on others.

Incidents of physical intervention are appropriately recorded and are only used to safeguard children and young people in crisis situations. There is good management oversight of the incidents. Children and young people are consulted following each intervention. This means that children and young people receive nurturing responses from the adults who care for them following crisis episodes.

Children and young people spoken to say that they feel safe and know that the adults are there to help protect them. One young person commented, 'I get annoyed sometimes as I have to answer calls to the staff when I am playing out. I know they do it because they care and they are looking out for me. I know they are just trying to keep me safe.'

The use of social media and the internet is carefully managed to enable children and young people to enjoy using it safely. The staff team has taken a rigorous approach to educating the children and young people around keeping safe in a variety of settings. This includes the risks of accessing social media, exploitation and substance misuse. This helps children and young people to recognise risks and helps them to keep themselves safe in and outside the home.

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

The registered manager is very experienced and qualified for the position held. He is supported in his role by an experienced acting deputy manager and the nurturing staff team. Together, they have demonstrated excellent resilience to the safeguarding incidents that expose children and young people to exploitation. A professional commented, 'They are great. They are doing all that they can to safeguard [Name]. There is nothing more that they could do. They have gone above and beyond.'

The registered manager is confident in challenging other professionals where there are shortfalls in the quality of care provided to children and young people. He continues to maintain positive working relationships with a range of professionals. Feedback from professionals was impressive. Comments such as 'highly knowledgeable', 'skilled' and 'child-focused' were common phrases used.

The registered manager recognises the importance of developing a highly skilled staff team. He ensures that his staff team members complete mandatory training and receive regular supervisions. He has been proactive in sourcing training that is relevant to the needs of the children and young people. He ensures that the staff team members have opportunities to consult with a clinical psychologist every month. This benefits children and young people as they are receiving consistent care. Relief staff have not received the same training. To ensure that practice in the home continues to be consistent, the manager should ensure that all staff, including relief staff, access the same training and consultations with the clinical psychologist.

The registered manager is very involved within the home on a day-to-day basis. This means that he is able to monitor practice and to ensure that the physical maintenance of

the home is suitable. He has plans to develop the rear of the property and has ordered new windows. The children and young people were observed to be relaxed and jovial with the registered manager and the staff team. These positive relationships enhance children's and young people's experiences of being cared for and promote good progress.

The registered manager knows the home's strengths as well as areas for development. He is able to accept constructive feedback from his independent visitor as well as the inspector to help drive improvements forward. He has a clear vision for the home. His motivation is to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people, taking into account their starting points.

## **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:** 1254835

**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:** Martin Birch

**Registered manager:** Mark Christie

## Inspector

Jacqueline Tate: social care inspector

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