

1232650

Registered provider: Friends Together Care Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to three children who may have emotional and/or social difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 1 September 2020, to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

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: 21 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A monitoring visit was carried out on 9 June 2020 in response to information received by Ofsted which suggested potential breaches in regulations. Following the visit, a compliance notice was issued under regulation 12 to address serious concerns relating to the protection of children.

A monitoring visit was completed on 16 July 2020 to review the action taken by the provider. The inspector found that the compliance notice had been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/01/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
22/10/2019	Full	Good
12/09/2018	Full	Good
05/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are settled and enjoying trusting relationships with the staff, who enjoy spending time with them. Children enjoy a wide range of activities, including planned themed nights. One child scored living in the home as nine out of 10, and one scored it 10 out of 10. One child said, 'I couldn't have asked for a better opportunity here. I feel like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders. I've been smiling a lot more now.'

The manager and deputy manager prepare children well before they move into the home. Visits and overnight stays are offered, and family members are encouraged to be involved. Children are provided with a copy of the children's guide and complaints procedure on their arrival. Children who live in the home are consulted and their views sought about new children joining. This approach helps children to understand the rules of their home and helps them to settle quickly.

Staff are sensitive to the children's specific needs and treat them with dignity and respect. For children joining the home whose first language is not English, the staff ensure that key documents such as the children's guide are translated into their first language. Staff use creative ways to ensure that effective communication takes place and the children's views are sought. This allows children to develop a positive self-image and a sense of their own identity.

The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard. Children are given the opportunity to redecorate their bedroom to their liking when they first move into the home. There are photos of the children enjoying time with the staff and with their family members displayed around the home. The care that the staff put into the home helps the children to feel valued and to develop a sense of belonging.

Children know how to complain and are confident in speaking to staff should they need to. The complaints forms are readily accessible in the home, so if the children want to make a complaint confidentially, they can. This provides the children with a range of options should they wish to make a complaint, empowering them to do so.

Children are in good health and their health needs are well met. Staff ensure that the children access universal services and they make routine appointments for them. Staff use the positive relationships that they have with the children to promote good health and to provide support. This means that the children develop a keen sense of how to look after their own health and, as a result, they remain healthy.

Education attendance for the children is variable. For those children who experience barriers to attending school, staff advocate on their behalf, ensuring that their wishes are represented. Staff attend all education meetings and challenge the plans for children when they feel that these do not meet their

education needs. Staff are creative in providing the children with informal education. This provides the opportunity for the children to make progress in their education.

Regular key-work sessions take place with each child every month, with additional sessions taking place following any significant incidents. Informal 'My Chat' sessions also take place regularly. These give the children the opportunity to increase their knowledge and understanding in certain areas, for example drug and alcohol use and social media, as well as time to discuss and reflect on their behaviour.

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

Children say that they feel safe living in this home. Staff understand safeguarding procedures and follow them, which reduces the risks for the children. Children's combined risk assessment and behaviour support plans are detailed, easy to understand and are kept up to date. This ensures that the staff always have the most up-to-date information when providing care to the children, which keeps them safe.

Staff provide the children with a clear message that their safety and well-being are important. When children go missing from the home, the staff follow the missing-from-home procedure and actively try to secure their safe return. This includes persistently trying to contact them by telephone and remaining in contact with family members as well as driving to all known locations where they might be to locate them. Once children are found, independent return home interviews are requested.

Safer recruitment processes are followed when staff are appointed. This provides assurance that they are suitably vetted and qualified to provide care.

A review of documents shows that there is one serious incident that has not been notified to the regulator. This failure means that Ofsted is unable to scrutinise the information to ensure that the manager has taken appropriate action to keep children safe.

Staff only use physical intervention as a last resort and to protect the child and those around them from harm. However, the records relating to the use of physical intervention are not completed as required. Staff debriefs are not carried out, there is no record of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the measure being taken, and it is not clear whether discussions with the children have been completed in the appropriate timescale. The lack of information within the record means that it cannot be established whether the holds are safe, necessary and proportionate.

Rewards given to the children far outweigh the use of sanctions. However, there are shortfalls in the recording of sanctions, and children's views are not recorded. This means that the children do not have the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour, and the manager cannot be assured that the sanctions given are fair and appropriate.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. The registered manager and the deputy manager are a strong partnership and complement each other well. The manager is supported by a small, stable and committed staff team. This means that the children benefit from consistent staffing arrangements, which help to provide them with stability and security.

The manager ensures that the staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to care for the children effectively. All staff have a structured training programme that is relevant to the individual needs of the children. Mandatory training is up to date and the staff identify what further training they would benefit from. Training records are kept up to date and identify the type of training completed as well as when training needs to be reviewed.

Staff, including the registered manager, receive regular supervision. However, it lacks reflection on practice as well as professional scrutiny and challenge. This shortfall means that the staff are not being provided with an opportunity to reflect and develop and to improve their practice.

The manager and the deputy manager demonstrate a culture of openness and willingness to listen and change. This is noted in the provider's quality of care review, which has been improved particularly with regards to consultation. However, the document does not include progress made from the previous action plan. This means that those reading the review are unlikely to have a detailed understanding of the progress made since the last review.

The most recent statement of purpose, while available at the time of the inspection, contains inaccuracies and has not been sent to the regulator within the required timescale. This means that parents, Ofsted and other professionals do not have the correct information to satisfy themselves that children are cared for in line with the statement of purpose.

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, 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
<p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. <p>(Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b))</p>	12 November 2021
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline, or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the date, time, and location of the use of the measure; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use 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 	12 November 2021

confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.

(Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(ii)(iii)(v)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

This specifically relates to sanction and physical intervention records.

Recommendations

- The registered provider should ensure that systems are in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive regular supervision so that they can reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered provider should ensure that all serious incidents relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home are notified to Ofsted. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)
- The registered provider should ensure that the Quality Care review identifies the progress made on the previous action plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

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: 1232650

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Friends Together Care Homes Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Thomas Worthington

Registered manager: Christine Cracknell

Inspector

Paula Shepherd, Social Care Inspector

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