

## Children's homes inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>6 July 2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC431228</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>Unique Care Homes Support Limited</b>
<b>Registered provider address</b>	<b>Holland House, 1–5 Oakfield, Sale, Cheshire M33 6TT</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Paula Marshall</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Janine Beamer</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Michael Mulvaney</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>6 July 2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Improved effectiveness</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>

**SC431228**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- The manager and staff have worked effectively to meet the needs of these children. As a result, children are making good progress because of living in this home.
- The manager reviews children's safe care plans and assessments to ensure that they are up to date. This means that staff have the most recent information to meet the children's needs.
- Children are making good progress with their education. Staff support has motivated them to attend school regularly. Children are gaining knowledge and skills, which will help towards further education or training.
- Children participate in key work sessions that relate directly to the care plans and agreements with the placing authorities.
- Staff build and maintain positive relationships with the children. There is an emphasis on helping children to learn to manage their emotions.
- Children say that they have good relationships with the staff. They are happy in this home and placing social workers have no concerns with regard to safeguarding of the children.
- Children do go missing from this home. Staff act quickly to alert the police to ensure that they are located as soon as possible. Staff complete direct work with children to try to understand the issues that may have led them to go missing.
- Staff work with children to help them understand online and internet risks.
- The manager reviews and monitors the work of staff to ensure that children are progressing positively. She guides staff to change their approach if this has not been as successful as anticipated. As a result, staff remain focused on achieving positive outcomes.
- Not all the staff have the appropriate qualification to work in the home.

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained the level 3 diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ('the level 3 diploma') or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the level 3 diploma. The relevant date is, in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1 April 2014, the date which falls two years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1 April 2014, 1 April 2016. (Regulation 32 (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))	19 August 2016

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people of the same gender with emotional and behavioural difficulties. A private company operates the home.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27 January 2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10 November 2015	Full	Good
17 March 2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
9 December 2014	Full	Good

## Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Children are making good progress because they live in this home. The manager and staff have worked effectively to meet the needs of these children. The children benefit from stability when previously they have had a number of placements that ended in an unplanned way. A placing social worker commented, 'The staff at the home have shown stickability. They have been aware of his challenging behaviour and have been prepared to manage it. He is much more settled in this home, there has been positive work with staff and the home is meeting his needs.'</p> <p>Children's safe care plans and assessments are up to date. A review of these plans at inspection reveals that they are good and accurate. The manager reviews the plans and ensures that they include an evaluation of risk factors for the children. Staff are working towards goals set by the manager in consultation with the children and placing authorities. Consequently, children's development is consistently progressing.</p> <p>Children have made progress at school. Some have completed foundation course work at local colleges. These courses have also helped them to make friends outside of the home. Children have developed study skills at the in-house school. Other children have shown that they are making good progress towards entry level 2 in English and mathematics, which reflects an appropriate programme of study given their starting points. Staff support has motivated them to attend regularly. There is evidence of commitment to study in the classroom. Because of this, children are gaining knowledge and skills, which will help towards further education or training.</p> <p>Staff build and maintain positive relationships with the children. There is an emphasis on helping children to learn to manage their emotions. Children participate in key work sessions. These sessions relate directly to the care plans and agreements with the placing authorities. Staff show a caring and nurturing approach and encourage children to take part in these meetings. This helps the children to focus on the important issues in their lives. As a result, they develop confidence in these relationships.</p> <p>Children have access to a range of activities, which they are encouraged to make active choices about in group meetings with staff and in one-to-one meetings. These include skaters (roller skating) and the cinema, as well as sporting activities such as table tennis and football. The home has access to a sports coach who has many years' experience coaching elite athletes. He skilfully mentors the children to learn the etiquette of participating. As a result, some have taken part in competitive sport for the first time. This helps the children to develop self-esteem</p>	

and confidence.

Children, whose pathway plan is for independent living, develop independence skills with staff encouragement. The provider has semi-independent living accommodation next door to the home. The children practice self-help skills, such as cooking and cleaning with support from staff. This means that the children can practice these skills within an environment which they can feel confident, ahead of moving into the community. One older child is making the transition to an adult service provision, because of the support that they have received. Their social worker said, 'The staff have supported him to make a positive transition towards the new placement. He has received so much support and anything that he could have wanted he obtained. The placement has done wonderful things for him.'

Children enjoy home-cooked food. They choose the menu during community meetings. They are encouraged to try healthy options and the older children will help to prepare some of the meals. This helps foster a family atmosphere at meal times. Children receive support to manage their well-being. They are encouraged to make and attend appointments with doctors, dentists and opticians. Those with specific health needs attend at clinics as needed. Consequently, children's health is good and staff help them to maintain contact with those professionals who can ensure that it remains so.

Children build on positive contact with their extended family, assisted by staff. This helps them to maintain relationships with important people in their lives and helps them to understand their background and culture. The manager is eager to promote safe contact in the home, if assessed as appropriate, or in the locality of their family, as necessary.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Children say that they are happy in this home and that they have good relationships with the staff. One child commented, 'I have been out fishing with the staff, which was good. I am now playing football in a local team. School is going well. I am starting my independent living plan. I already have a lot of the skills, but I get help with cooking.' Placing social workers have no concerns about the safe care of these children. One placing social worker stated, 'The home do all they can to keep him safe. They follow all protocols. Communication is good. I have no concerns about the stability of the placement or this safe care.'</p> <p>Children do go missing from this home. When they do, staff act quickly to alert the police and other agencies to ensure that they are located as soon as possible. When children return, staff complete direct work with them to try to understand the issues that may have led them to go missing from the home. Staff are aware of the significant risks that the children may be at if they are away from the home for any length of time. Staff have completed work with children with regard to online</p>	

and internet risks. Children understand that supervision of their internet use protects them. This helps to minimise the risk of child sexual exploitation.

Children at this home have had disrupted early life experiences. For some, exposure to significant harm and abuse occurred. This has resulted in behaviour which challenges their carers' ability to meet their needs. Trained staff intervene to prevent children from harming themselves or others. There have been 17 restraints since the last inspection. A review of records of these incidents shows that they are clear and detailed. Staff employ de-escalation techniques first. The manager has reviewed the incidents and the staff have reflected on the interventions to see if they could have managed the situation differently. This helps to inform future practice and strategies.

Children's behaviour has recently improved. They receive an incentive for behaving appropriately, such as extra activities or rewards. As a last resort, staff will use sanctions when children display unwanted behaviours, including the loss of an activity or access to a computer games console. This helps to reinforce positive behaviour and help children to understand when their behaviour is unacceptable.

The manager has a positive relationship with the local safeguarding children board. Children's key workers are clear about signs of grooming and on protecting them from significant harm. Staff talk openly about the processes to employ if they have concerns about safe care practices in the home.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The manager has a National Vocational Qualification level 4 in childcare and management and has been in post for two years. She skilfully motivates the staff through regular supervision to provide a good quality of care to the children. She is available to observe the staff working with the children and offer advice and guidance. This enables her to act swiftly if practice issues occur. Equally, it gives her the opportunity to praise good performance.</p> <p>The manager has challenged a local authority to ensure that a child has the required information about his family and decisions taken. This has resulted in the child receiving support from an advocate to make their needs known. Placing social workers are satisfied with the progress that children are making because of living in this home. An independent reviewing officer stated, 'This young man is highly anxious. The home is meeting his needs and the improvement in his behaviour is showing that the home are managing this well. All professionals are pleased at the progress he is making.'</p> <p>The manager reviews and monitors the work completed constantly. This ensures that children are progressing positively. The manager guides staff to change their approach if this has not been as successful as hoped. She works with other</p>	

agencies to meet the children's needs and has a good relationship with the independent visitor. Together they ensure that the services provided are achieving the aims and objectives detailed in the statement of purpose.

The manager has assessed the strengths of the team as being a diverse team with a mix of experienced workers and newly qualified workers. She considers that this has been positive for the team and the children. There is a good skill mix and a wide age range of staff, which children warm to. This has helped the children to make and build on relationships with staff members from a range of backgrounds. Another positive is the development of a therapeutic model staff use to work with the children. These, along with the access to activities as well as the in-house school, encourage the children to make progress.

Some staff have not completed the National Vocational Qualification level 3 inside of the required timescale. As a result, they do not have the required qualification to fulfil their role. Other staff have completed this qualification and have completed other training, which means that they have the skills to meet the needs of this group of children. Those staff speak highly of the training that they receive; believing that it has prepared them to work proactively with the children.

## What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
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