

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	21/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC431228
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Unique Care Homes Support Limited
Registered provider address	Holland House, 1–5 Oakfield, Sale, Cheshire M33 6TT

Responsible individual	Joanne Murray
Registered manager	Rosie Ellington
Inspector	Michael Mulvaney

Inspection date	21/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
<p>This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.</p>	
<p>The manager has met the requirement raised at the last inspection. All eligible staff have completed their diploma-level qualification. This provides the staff with the knowledge base that they need to work with the children. All new staff have started to work towards their diploma-level qualification. They have completed induction training, which prepares them to work with the children. The manager supervises the staff on a regular basis. She works alongside the staff to support them and to promote good practice in the home.</p> <p>There have been three complaints since the last inspection. The manager has investigated the complaints but there is no record to show that the outcomes have been shared with the complainants. This is not in line with the home's own complaints procedure. Consequently, children are not clear about the outcome of their concerns. One of these complaints related to the conduct of a member of staff. The manager has liaised with the designated officer, who confirmed that the manager has followed the procedure to investigate the concern appropriately. The manager has completed a thorough investigation and notified Ofsted of the incident.</p> <p>The manager has arranged for additional physical intervention training because of the issues raised in the investigation. She has identified shortfalls and taken robust action to ensure that restraints are completed safely and effectively. There are shortfalls in the quality of the records of physical interventions, which lack detail about antecedent behaviour. This does not enable the manager and staff to reflect fully on incidents to help them to identify alternative approaches to meet the children's needs.</p> <p>The manager has completed impact risk assessments in relation to the planned admissions to the home. Consequently, the staff have been able to plan for and minimise the impact of these placements on the children currently living in the home. However, the manager has not prepared impact risk assessments for the two emergency placements made since the last inspection. As a result, she does not have a record of the plans or actions to reduce risks arising as a result of those placements. The skilful and flexible approach of the staff and positive verbal</p>	

updates and handovers between staff have reduced the impact of this shortfall.

Children benefit from good quality care delivered by skilled staff. Feedback from placing social workers about how the children who arrived in an emergency have been supported to settle is positive. One placing social worker said, 'The child arrived as an emergency but the staff worked quickly to start to build a positive relationship. The staff have been helped to manage the child's individual needs, which the child struggled with prior to this placement.' Children speak positively about their experiences in the home. One child said, 'I feel safe in the home because the staff look out for me. I have started to put posters up in my room.'

There have been eight incidents of children going missing from this home. Staff have worked proactively with the police and other agencies to ensure that the children return safely. The staff understand the risks of child sexual exploitation and they have undertaken direct key work to help the children to understand these concerns.

Observations at this inspection show good relationships between the staff and the children. The children benefit from regular direct work with their key workers. The staff's work is informed by up-to-date care plans and, as a result, the children are making progress. Some children have made progress in managing their emotions, while others have been able to participate more in activities. Staff meet with the children to discuss the activities that the children are interested in. Some children are participating in football tournaments with peers from the community. Consequently, they are building friendship groups outside the home as well as improving their fitness.

Children are making good progress educationally. Some of the children who are new to the home had not been in school for some time. A teacher at the in-house school commented, 'Children have made some significant progress. In particular, with their communication and making their needs known. The children are aware of their education targets and how hard they need to work. Some children can now maintain focus and complete their coursework.' Staff maintain their commitment to the children's education by attending parents' evenings at external school provision. Some of the children are starting to undertake work experience, which will promote their skills and knowledge of the world of work.

Information about this children's home

This private company operated home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children of the same gender who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/07/2016	CH – Full (aligned)	Good
27/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/11/2015	Full	Good
17/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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>13: The leadership and management standard.</p> <p>In order to meet leadership and management standard, the registered provider must ensure:</p> <p>(2) (g) (ii) that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on feedback on the experience of the children, including complaints received.</p> <p>This is with particular reference to feeding back to children the outcomes of their complaints and how practice has changed and improved as a result.</p>	03/05/2017

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that records of restraint are kept and enable the registered person and staff to review the use of restraint. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

In particular, identify effective practice and provide the opportunity to review practice to ensure that it meets the needs of each child.

- Ensure that placements for children are only accepted when managers are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

In particular, ensure that there is a record of the assessment of group dynamic risks and reduction measures when considering emergency placements.

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 that 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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