

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	23/03/2017
Unique reference number	1027158
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	Angela Coulson
Inspector	Michael Mulvaney

Inspection date	23/03/2017
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 full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.</p> <p>The requirement raised at the last inspection, in November 2016, remains unmet and is raised again. The independent visitor visits the home regularly and reports to the provider. However, the visitor has not contacted parents, or external stakeholders, such as placing authorities. Crucially, the visitor has not recorded any discussions with the children in the home. Consequently, the report lacks the views of the children, which does not help the manager to understand the impact that the home is having on the children's lives or how to improve the outcomes for children.</p> <p>The staff have used physical intervention on two occasions since the last inspection. The manager has identified shortfalls in the records of these interventions and how the records support the staff to learn from the incidents. As a result, she has arranged training for the whole staff team with a focus on techniques and the quality of records of incidents.</p> <p>Children go missing from the home. There was a significant concern regarding one child who placed themselves at risk in the community. The manager ended the placement to safeguard the child. Staff followed the missing-from-care protocol and alerted the police and other agencies to support the child's prompt return to the home. The staff have received training that has raised their awareness of the risks of child sexual exploitation for children who are missing from care.</p> <p>There has been one complaint about the home. The manager has followed up the concerns and notified the complainant of the outcome.</p> <p>The manager has notified Ofsted of the 12 significant incidents since the last inspection. She has managed each incident effectively and ensured that the information is recorded in a way that helps the staff to understand and learn from the incidents.</p> <p>The manager works directly with the children. This means that she has good oversight of the staff's practice and their work with the children.</p>	

The manager has completed impact risk assessments of the children most recently placed in the home. This means that the staff are guided by up-to-date information, which helps the new children to settle and supports the staff's ongoing work with the children who are already living in the home. Placing social workers speak highly of the quality of care. One commented, 'There are very helpful staff who have built a very good relationship with this child. The staff have made it clear that they will not give up on her, and this has helped her to settle. Staff have been very positive to encourage this child and supportive of the plan for them to return home, which has worked very well. The staff are working at keeping the child safe. The child continues to receive a good service.' Children in the home say that they are safe. One said, 'I can talk to the staff about anything. They do not get angry or stressed, so it's easy to talk to them.'

Children are making progress with their education. Their attendance is 100% and they are on target to achieve positive results in their examinations. Some are looking to go on to further education at colleges while some are engaged in work experience, which will help them with useful skills and opportunities outside the home.

Children participate in one-to-one sessions with staff and in group meetings to discuss how the home is meeting their needs. Together, they decide on what activities they will participate in. This has led to children attending a local trampoline centre and a Laser Quest centre. Other children have been encouraged to play pool and to go to the cinema. Some of the children have shown an interest in football and have played in a local team. This has helped them to stay fit and has provided a friendship group outside the home.

Some of the children smoke. The manager has put a plan together to complete direct work to support the children to give up smoking. The plan includes using an external agency, which has some expertise in this area, meeting with the children. However, the manager has not put the plan into action. Consequently, children have not received the support that they need.

The continued support from staff has seen children's family contact improve. Staff travel with the children to facilitate contact, and this has led to children extending their contact to overnight stays and holiday periods. As a result, the children's relationships with important people in their lives have developed positively. In some cases, this has led to the introduction of family reintegration plans.

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a private organisation. The home provides care and accommodation for up to six children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/11/2016	Full	Good
06/01/2016	Full	Good

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
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person, if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, and relatives, as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44(2)(a))	28/04/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that all staff encourage children to take a proactive role in looking after their day-to-day health and their well-being. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 34, paragraph 7.10)

In particular, ensure that there is ongoing and robust support in place to enable the children to reduce or stop their use of tobacco.

- Keep records of restraint that enable the registered person and staff to review the use of restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly when any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure that it meets the needs of each child. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including quality standards’, page 49, paragraph 9.59)

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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