

# 1249326

Registered provider: Unity Residential Care Services

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this children's home**

The home may provide care and accommodation for up to three children, who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private provider.

**Inspection date:** 14 March 2018

**Judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Date of last inspection:** 5 July 2017

**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**

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.

The registered manager has several years of experience working with and managing children's and young people's residential care services. He holds a level 5 qualification in leadership and management. He is passionate about the care afforded to children living in the home and supports staff to ensure that each child has the opportunity to reach their potential.

Since the last inspection, children have experienced a settled period, which has impacted positively on each of them. The admission of a third child was planned and only took place once the registered manager was confident that the two existing children were ready for this. This has resulted in a smooth transition throughout

which all children's needs have been prioritised.

The previous inspection identified fractious and volatile relationships between children. Children now have positive relationships with each other and with the staff. Children are safe and said that they feel safe. There are no incidents of bullying. Staff undertake work with children on conflict resolution. One child told the inspector, 'I have learned so much since I have been here from the staff and the other young people. I can now see my potential.'

Regular key-work sessions take place with children. Discussions focus on a range of matters that are pertinent to children. These include reflecting on behaviour, self-harm, substance misuse and children's feelings and views. Staff are skilled and use a range of interactive exercises to engage children. This means that key work sessions help children understand how to keep themselves safe. They also provide children with information about their culture and identity.

All children now attend school. Education is valued in this home, and children know that school attendance is not optional. Children benefit from the clear expectations. The staff have developed excellent relationships with teachers and ensure that issues are addressed and, when necessary, that plans are in place to improve children's learning. A headteacher commented, 'We have a joinedup, seamless approach.'

Staff are skilled in supporting children who harm themselves. Extensive key-work sessions take place with children. One child has also engaged in therapeutic work. Consequently, incidents of self-harm have significantly reduced. Children feel confident and able to seek support from the staff team. One child said, 'I will just say how I feel. I know staff will listen.'

Staff are trained to recognise and respond to signs of child sexual exploitation. One child previously identified as being at high risk of sexual exploitation is now making progress in all areas, and the risk has significantly reduced.

Staff undertake training in the use of physical restraint and de-escalation techniques. They only use physical restraint to prevent young people from hurting themselves and/or others. Since the last inspection, there has been one incident when physical restraint was required. Staff have debriefing sessions after incidents to look at how they could have managed incidents differently and to share effective methods of working with children. This promotes young people's safety and welfare.

The registered manager has ensured that there is a new, more robust complaints procedure in place. All staff receive training in respect of complaints. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. The new process will ensure that children's views are heard.

Only suitable people are employed to care for children. The use of agency staff has reduced. This means that children are cared for by staff who know them well.

Staff are well supervised and supported and express confidence in the leadership team. An experienced deputy manager supports the registered manager. The managers and staff know children well and have a good understanding of their needs. There are good opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice through team meetings and discussions in regular one-to-one meetings. Staff are enthusiastic about their roles, and are committed to improving children's lives.

The registered manager has met all of the requirements from the previous inspection.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 05/07/2017      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

## 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.

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.

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:** 1249326

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Unity Residential Care Services

**Registered provider address:** Unity Residential Care Services Ltd, 98 Lancaster Road, Newcastle Under Lyme ST5 1DS

**Responsible individual:** Hilary Jones

**Registered manager:** Lyndan Whiston

## Inspector

Annemarie Parker, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
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