

1027158

Registered provider: Unique Care Homes Support Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to six children aged between 8 and 17 years. The manager has been registered since February 2018.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 September 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be 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: 29 September 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/09/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
17/05/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/11/2016	Full	Good

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))</p> <p>This is with particular regard to ensuring that impact referral assessments and safety plans are detailed and include all relevant information.</p>	28/09/2018
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(v)(vii))</p>	13/09/2018
<p>The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). (Regulation 46 (1)(2))</p>	28/09/2018

This is in regard to making an assessment of the environmental risks to the home.	
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Recommendations

- Homes must also meet children's basic day to day needs and physical necessities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

This is with regard to the replacement of the dishwasher.

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to 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)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children make good progress. They benefit from a consistent staff team that is clear about behavioural expectations. These clear expectations are balanced with an understanding of the children's backgrounds and their behaviours. The children receive consistent messages and feel that they are fairly treated.

The children all attend school, and one new child has school work sent to the home. The timetable and quality of education for this child incorporate wider experiences and time out of the home. Four children benefit from established school placements. The home's routine helps children to settle early in the evening in preparation for the next day. Homework is supported by the staff, who liaise closely with education providers. The staff challenge any barriers to learning. The children are busy and have a purpose; they benefit from a predictable routine.

Children attend health and hospital appointments, with good support from staff. This helps children who have specific health concerns to make good progress under the guidance of health professionals.

The staff have a relaxed and warm rapport with children. Staff balance parental guidance with humour and nurture. Children and staff eat meals together around the table. Planning meals with children means that these meals incorporate the children's choices. Staff add a healthy twist, and the children eat well and benefit from a balanced diet.

The environment is colourful and reflects children's tastes and preferences. There are vegetables growing in the garden, and these are used in the children's meals. The house is spacious and clean, but the dishwasher has been broken for many months. Catering is on the scale of 10 people a night. The washing-up time is lengthy during busy periods of

the day when children may need support.

Children share their views readily, and these influence many aspects of their care. The children enjoy a range of interesting experiences with the staff, such as holidays abroad, camping, hiking and festival events. The children are encouraged to help with chores around the house, and they negotiate well to share and swap these chores. The children contribute their ideas about new decor and furnishings, giving them a sense of ownership of their home.

A social worker said, 'It is a warm, friendly home that offers opportunities to explore the world around [the child], maintain a level of privacy, and enable her to have access to practical and emotional support.' Another social worker sought to place a child at the home following the positive experience of one placement.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The risks to children are known by staff, and immediate dangers are understood and prevented. However, the recording and assessment of risk continue to be poor. The impact risk assessment for new admissions fails to look at the combination of new children and existing children who present with similar risks. The safety plans for children do not include all of the risks identified in the local authority referral paperwork. Despite these shortfalls, the staff are aware of the risks and manage them to provide immediate safeguards.

The home's risk assessment for the local area includes statistical data but fails to include details about farm buildings and barns near the property. This is despite previous incidents when children have gone to these buildings. The whole approach to assessing and recording risk lacks knowledge and understanding.

Complaints about staff are managed in order to provide immediate safeguards for the child and the member of staff. However, one complaint from a child was investigated prior to a referral to the designated officer, and notified to Ofsted 13 days later. This does not provide transparent and objective oversight in managing allegations.

Incidents at this home have reduced significantly. When children have been missing from the home, the staff are responsive and follow protocols to ensure a safe return. Trained staff manage incidents of self-harm appropriately. High-risk behaviours are managed well.

The staff use positive reinforcement. They acknowledge children's efforts and reward good behaviour. These rewards significantly outweigh negative consequences for unwanted behaviour. The children know that staff notice small improvements in their behaviours, and this encourages positive change.

The children get on well with one another and resolve minor disagreements. The combination of the children's ages and personalities works well. There is a family atmosphere that provides the children with a sense of security and belonging. When describing the children's home, one child said, 'It's just home. It's so much nicer than

the last home, because it feels like home.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager was registered in February 2018. She is qualified and experienced for the role. She has worked very well with the deputy manager and responsible individual to make positive changes. These changes include improving the children's experiences, the environment, team morale and the quality of external monitoring.

There were six requirements raised at the last interim inspection; five of these are met. One has been raised again. The manager is committed to making this home a positive environment for children to live in.

The staff team is gaining confidence and experience. The staff are all either enrolled on a relevant level 3 qualification or qualified to level 3. Specific training equips staff to deal with high-risk behaviours. The staff bring skills to the home and develop areas that they are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about. Professional development is encouraged by the manager.

Staff morale is good. The staff feel supported. They have supervision with a line manager at regular intervals. However, the recording and content of the supervision sessions vary. Some records comprehensively cover required areas, whereas others are light-touch and lack reflection. This does not consistently encourage the staff to reflect on their practice.

The external monitoring has improved following a change of independent visitor. The visits capture stakeholders' views and demonstrate time spent with children. The reports state how effectively children are safeguarded.

The children at this home confidently voice their views in the knowledge that their choices count, and they influence the running of the home.

Relationships with professionals are good. The professionals spoken to during the inspection were pleased with children's progress and the care provided by the staff. One social worker said, 'I have been extremely impressed with their [the staff's] level of commitment and care to [the child].'

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.

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: 1027158

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Unique Care Homes Support Limited

Registered provider address: 5 Brooklands Place, Brooklands Road, Sale, Cheshire M33 3SD

Responsible individual: Joanne Murray

Registered manager: Sarah Mansi

Inspector

Deirdra Keating: social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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