

# SC431228

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 run home provides care for up to six children. The children may have had traumatic experiences that have left them vulnerable. The manager of the home was registered with Ofsted in March 2017.

**Inspection dates:** 30 to 31 October 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **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:** 18 July 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/07/2017	Full	Good
21/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
06/07/2016	Full	Good
27/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

## 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 premises used for the purpose of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(d))</p> <p>In particular, take action to remove hazards present in the outdoor area, including loose bricks, shopping baskets and other discarded items.</p>	30/11/2018
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))</p>	30/11/2018

### Recommendations

- Staff should make available in the home, information in an appropriate form which enables children to contact their placing authority to call for a review of their care plan if they have concerns about their safety or welfare. Homes should encourage children to understand that they can speak to an independent advocate, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), Ofsted inspectors or other relevant persons if they have concerns about their safety. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.11)
- The registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

In particular, ensure that references for staff are verified.

- Regulations 35–39 detail the records that must be kept in children’s homes. Case records must be kept up-to-date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.3)

In particular, ensure that there is a clear record of whether a return interview was requested following an incident of a child going missing, and whether an interview took place.

## **Inspection judgements**

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children benefit from positive experiences. The staff forge strong and positive relationships with the children by communicating in an open, honest and consistent way.

The staff prioritise arranging education for children when they move into the home. Children are given incentives to attend school, and attendance levels are high. The staff have daily contact with school staff and attend meetings to discuss and monitor children’s progress.

The staff specialise in providing a long-term home for children and preparing them for independence. The home’s management ensures that children who move into the home will fit in with those children who already live there.

The children regularly see their families and friends. The staff at the home take the children to meet with their families and support these relationships in accordance with individual circumstances.

Children participate in a wide range of activities that reflect their individual interests. These include cinema trips, bowling, horse riding and scuba diving. Children have joined local football and martial arts clubs, and another child attended a drama club. Children are therefore enabled to develop their skills, talent and knowledge, and expand their social peer groups.

The children know how to make a complaint. The children speak to staff if they have any issues. However, the children do not have information about all of the options that they have for making a complaint, which could limit them if they wish to speak to someone outside of the staff team to raise a concern.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

The staff are well trained and experienced and understand effective safeguarding practice. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities to safeguard the children.

The staff understand the value of effective multi-agency working and have good relationships with all agencies involved with the children. A teacher said, 'The staff are fantastic and advocate well on behalf of the children. When you speak with the staff, it is like speaking with a parent. They are passionate about the children's welfare. They attend all parent evenings and school events and keep us up to date with everything.'

The staff use incentives to good effect to encourage positive behaviour. Negative consequences are proportionate. The records of consequences are scrutinised and analysed by the manager to assess whether they are fair and proportionate.

The children sometimes present with difficult and challenging behaviours, which are de-escalated by staff to good effect. There was a recent increase in physical interventions following a child moving into the home. These physical interventions are well recorded and appropriate to safeguard children and staff. However, during several physical interventions, the child alleged that staff had hurt him. The manager followed up these allegations robustly with the child, who rescinded the complaints, but she failed to notify Ofsted. Failure to notify means that Ofsted is unable to monitor the effectiveness of the actions that the staff take to safeguard children.

The large, attractively decorated home is set in extensive grounds. There are items in the grounds such as loose bricks, shopping baskets, old suitcases and various other items that are hazardous to children and staff. The manager made immediate arrangements to have these hazards removed during the inspection.

Staff are proactive in looking for children when they go missing or leave the home without permission. There are few incidents of children going missing from the home; eight have been recorded incidents since the last inspection. However, the recording of these incidents requires attention as it is not always clear whether a return from missing interview was requested or took place.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager is registered with Ofsted. She is nurturing and child focused and has the relevant qualifications, experience and skills to manage the home. The staff are well trained and passionate about their roles. The staff team is well established and experienced and cares about the children's well-being and meets their needs.

The children's case files are detailed, concise and updated regularly. Risk assessments, behaviour management plans and key-working sessions are thorough and evidence children's participation. The staff and the children sign records to show that they understand the content.

The manager regularly consults children, families, staff and external professionals. These consultations contribute to thorough internal monitoring and review of the quality of care provided by the home. Monthly external monitoring visits offer appropriate challenge, and the reports contain actions for the manager to address.

The home's management team is supportive and accessible to staff and children. The children are discussed in detail at regular team meetings as well as during practice-led supervision sessions. The staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals. The staff value these opportunities to reflect on and discuss their professional development. A member of staff said, 'The team feels well supported by the management. [Managers] listen to what we say and take our opinions and suggestions on board.'

Safe recruitment checks were found to be lacking on one staff member's file. Failure to verify a reference can place children and other staff at risk.

## **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:** SC431228

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

**Registered provider:** Unique Care Homes Support Limited

**Registered provider address:** White House Business Centre, The White House,  
Greenalls Avenue, Warrington WA4 6HL

**Responsible individual:** Joanne Murray

**Registered manager:** Rosie Ellington

## Inspector

Ricky D'Arcy, social care inspector

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