

1259114

Registered provider: Unity Residential Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately-owned children's home for up to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties as a result of adverse childhood experiences.

The registered manager resigned from the home on 21 November 2019. A new manager was appointed on 7 October 2019. She is suitably qualified and her application to register with Ofsted is being processed.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 December 2019

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: 11 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/10/2018	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
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(2)(c)(i))	31/01/2020
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour. In particular the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(iii))	31/01/2020
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. (Regulation 19(1))	31/01/2020
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32(1)(d))	31/01/2020

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress from their starting points. Staff commitment and dedication to the children that they care for is a key strength of this home. Staff value and support children with patience and affection. Research and a clear understanding of attachment theory underpin staff practice.

Staff volunteer to work additional shifts to cover for absent colleagues. They feel strongly that children should be cared for by those that know them well and know how to keep them safe. Children benefit from warm and trusting relationships with staff.

Staff work closely with children to help them to understand their specific targets and the support available to achieve them. Children's care plans are written with them and for them. Staff make sure that children's views are central to the formulation of their care and, as a result of this, children's plans contain information which is meaningful to them.

Staff make and maintain excellent relationships with children's families and friends. Children receive emotional and practical support to enable them to keep in contact with the people who matter to them. For example, staff regularly welcome family members to the home. One child's mother visits him at home and they undertake a range of activities together including baking cakes. This enables children to maintain their family links which adds to their sense of emotional stability and their sense of identity.

The home is generally well maintained. However, some of the carpets in the home are heavily stained. Consequently, children are not always provided with a homely environment. The registered manager has plans in place to ensure that the carpets are replaced.

Children's educational progress varies. One child has made significant progress and he has achieved 100% attendance. However, two children are being educated at home through the provision of a tutor. The registered manager has worked tirelessly to ensure that each child has an up-to-date assessment of their educational needs. As a result of this challenge, progress is being made to identify appropriate provisions to meet each child's individual needs.

Professionals talk extremely positively about the excellent relationships between staff and children. A headteacher stated, 'Over 70% of our pupils are in care and I can honestly say that the home is the best we work with, the staff genuinely care.'

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

Staff are highly vigilant in keeping children safe. Children's risks and vulnerabilities are thoroughly assessed. Personalised individual risk assessments provide staff with the necessary guidance that they need to confidently promote children's safety and well-being. However, for one young person approaching adulthood, it is unclear why staff remove his phone at night, or how they are helping him to develop his understanding of risks and take responsibility for his own behaviour.

Staff promote a positive culture of praise and reward. As a result, negative consequences are rare and physical intervention has not been necessary since the last inspection. This is because staff are experienced and skilled in using de-escalation strategies. However, soon after children go to bed, the electricity supply to their televisions is cut off by a switch in the staff office. This institutionalised practice neither helps children to learn how to be responsible for their actions nor does it allow them to develop their independence skills.

There are very few incidents in the home and children do not go missing. Consequently,

children benefit from living in a home that provides them with stability.

Children's behaviour has significantly improved. Staff set clear and consistent boundaries. Staff help children to complete plans which identify triggers that make them feel angry or upset and think about techniques that they can use when they begin to feel like this. These plans also provide clear guidance for staff about how they should support children. This approach ensures that children feel more secure.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Records held at the home are comprehensive and maintained to a high standard. The registered manager has implemented excellent monitoring and review systems. These support her to review the service and identify areas for development. This is further supported by the monthly visits undertaken by the home's independent visitor.

Staff develop excellent working relationships with a number of other professionals. This coordinated approach helps children to make progress. School staff and social workers are very positive about the care that children receive. They receive regular updates on children's progress and feel confident that staff will address any issues.

Staff are very positive about the support that they receive from the registered manager. Supervision sessions are regular and of high quality. They help staff to generate ideas and reflect on their practice. New staff are supported through a clear, effective induction process. This ensures that children receive high-quality care.

Generally, good systems are in place to ensure that the recruitment and selection of staff is safe. However, on one occasion, senior managers within the organisation did not sufficiently review and risk assess some new information relating to a member of staff. Although there is no evidence that this has had a negative impact, this shortfall has the potential to place children at risk from adults who care for them.

Staff either hold the required level 3 diploma or are currently working to achieve this, and plans are in place to ensure that they complete this within the required timescales. Managers are resourceful and make effective links with local agencies who have provided child-specific training that informs staff practice and meets children's individual and diverse needs.

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: 1259114

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Unity Residential Care Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Hilary Jones

Registered manager: Gayle Heaton

Inspector

Annemarie Parker, social care inspector

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