

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: 29 to 30 January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 30 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/10/2018	Full	Good
18/07/2017	Full	Good
21/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
06/07/2016	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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that staff— help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; and de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(iv)(xi)) 	27/03/2020
<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that staff— 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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)) 	27/03/2020
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and 	30/04/2020

<p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; and</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(d)(e)(f))</p>	
<p>Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing—</p> <p>injury to any person (including the child);</p> <p>serious damage to the property of any person (including the child).</p> <p>Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20(1)(a)(b)(2))</p>	28/02/2020
<p>The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children;</p> <p>the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance;</p> <p>so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance; and</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24(1)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p>	30/04/2020
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.</p>	29/05/2020

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, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and
- to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.

A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced.

The independent person must produce a report about a visit ('the independent person's report') which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—

- children are effectively safeguarded; and
- the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.

The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44(1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(4)(a)(b)(5))

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, five children have moved into the home and three children have left. Some children are making progress and achieving good outcomes. However, high levels of conflict prevent some children from feeling safe in their living environment.

The children said that they get along with some of the children, but not others. There are regular incidents of aggression and some children are regularly restrained. One child is subject to racist and homophobic comments from other children at the home. The staff have not acted quickly enough to stop this child being targeted.

The staff have recorded that some of the children intimidate other children. The police have assisted with managing these behaviours. The staff try to intervene; however, some staff have not been trained in managing bullying. This means that not all staff have the skills that they need to recognise and deal effectively with conflict between the children.

The children know how to complain and can identify trusted adults to share their concerns with. However, opportunities have been missed to respond effectively to a child who has raised concerns about being fearful of other children.

The children pursue their interests and talents. One child makes music and sings each week at a studio. The staff helped one child to audition for 'Britain's Got Talent'. Another child represented the school at a football match. The children go to regular skating sessions. Nurturing children's interests builds their self-confidence and reinforces their self-worth. The staff act on the children's requests. A projector in the living room is used by the children to watch movies together on a big screen. This was installed in response to the children asking for a home cinema.

All the children have an education placement. One child is at mainstream school and visits his friend after school each week. The staff ensure that the children have their uniforms and any additional equipment. There are good relationships between the staff at the home and the school staff.

The staff regularly update parents about their children's plans. Some of the children's families live a long way from the home. The staff support the children to see family members and drive them to these visits. This means that the children can maintain positive relationships with their families.

External professionals said that the staff have high levels of compassion for the children and offer emotional warmth. A social worker said that, in the short time that she has been involved with the home, her initial impressions are good.

One child is being supported to prepare for a move to more independent living. This child has made steady progress with being able to go out independently. He talked about cooking for himself and sometimes for the staff and how he has learned to get the bus to college.

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

Not all the staff are trained in safeguarding. Although the staff try to safeguard the children, some children display challenging behaviour which the staff have found difficult to manage. Some of the staff have been badly injured by one child. This has led to those staff needing time off work.

Several children regularly run off site. The location of the home means that the children face risks of busy roads and open water. The staff follow the children, keeping them in sight, and try to encourage them to return to the home safely. However, the staff have not been effective in putting in place strategies to prevent these incidents. There is poor monitoring and oversight of these incidents. The reasons behind these behaviours have not been fully explored and understood by the staff.

The staff regularly restrain some children and hold one child on the floor for long periods. This child's risk assessment states that a floor hold should only be used as a last resort. The records state that the child has said that he is sometimes hurt during a restraint. Despite a review of the individual incident records, and management of specific

allegations, there is a lack of evident reflection and review of the patterns of behaviour and exploration of potential alternatives to manage the child safely.

All the children's bedrooms are fitted with door alarms to alert the staff to children's movements overnight. Agreements are in place with the relevant authorities on the use of these monitoring devices. However, the approach to using the alarms is not linked to children's individual risks and vulnerabilities. These arrangements are not reviewed and monitored. This does not give an opportunity for review of the suitability of these arrangements.

Allegations are shared with appropriate agencies and in accordance with statutory guidance. The home has positive relationships with relevant safeguarding authorities.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Changes to staffing have affected the smooth running of the home. Some staff have left and new staff have joined the home. High staff turnover means that the children have not received consistent care from adults who have experience of meeting their individual needs.

Some of the new staff lack experience. Over half the staff do not hold a relevant level 3 qualification in caring for children and young people. Some staff are not experienced in caring for children who display challenging behaviour.

The manager oversees the matching process for children's admission to the home. One child's referral paperwork said that he is vulnerable to the demands of peers. This child was moved into the home to live with children who are known to display bullying and aggressive behaviour. The home's statement of purpose talks about ensuring an immediate response to bullying. A lack of management oversight meant that this did not happen quickly enough to prevent a child suffering distress.

Some staff have been the victims of assault by the children. Failure to undertake risk assessments and implement effective risk-reduction measures means that there have been repeated incidents during which the staff have been hurt. The home is monitored by an independent visitor, who did not identify and raise these patterns and trends. This demonstrates a lack of effective monitoring of the service.

The manager said that staff shortages have led to some gaps in supervision. All staff receive an annual appraisal and new processes have led to improved effectiveness in this area. The staff said that they feel supported in their role and work together as a supportive team.

Managers take steps to promote equality and diversity. The staff explore children's feelings about gender and sexuality during key-work sessions. The staff support the children to be open about their beliefs.

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

Angela Weston, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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