

# 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 registered in May 2021.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 21 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

### Inspection dates: 8 to 9 June 2021

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 29 January 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/01/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good
30/10/2018	Full	Good
18/07/2017	Full	Good
21/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

## Inspection judgements

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

This is a home where the children feel happy and safe. The children have good relationships with the staff. Children confidently share their concerns with staff as and when they arise.

The staff have a good understanding of each child, and they know about children's likes, dislikes, hobbies and interests. Interactions between the staff and the children are positive and upbeat. The children have lived at the home on a long-term basis and have developed a sense of permanency and belonging.

The children have good experiences and make progress. The staff have supported children to manage their emotions safely. Staff encourage children to increase their educational engagement and consistently guide children about risk-taking. This encouragement and guidance increase the children's understanding and empower them to make positive choices.

The staff support the children to spend quality time with people that are important to them. The staff understand the importance of children maintaining family relationships and friendships outside the home. Staff oversee the children's time spent with others to ensure this is safe.

The home has undergone an extensive refurbishment. It is bright, clean, modern and significantly improved from its former state.

The staff widely understand the children's health needs and work hard to promote good health outcomes. The staff encouraged one child to engage in smoking cessation activities when it became apparent that he was smoking. Another child wished to reduce the amount of medication he was taking. This was fully supported by the staff who worked in collaboration with health professionals. The children

influence how they are cared for and the staff listen and respond appropriately to the children's views.

The children are able to engage in a range of activities. Although these have been limited due to the lockdown restrictions, the staff ensure that children engage in activities outside the home now that it is permissible to do so.

The children's needs are varied, and the staff provide the children with care that is tailored to their needs and preferences. Individualised care allows children to have a positive and personalised experience of living at the home.

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

The inspector was aware, during this inspection, that a serious child protection allegation was being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, the actions taken by the setting in response to the allegation were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform the inspector's judgement.

Allegations and safeguarding concerns are responded to appropriately. The manager liaises well with relevant professionals within appropriate timescales. There is a good record of the actions taken and the outcomes of safeguarding referrals.

On occasion, there have been significant concerns about the children using the internet safely. The staff have been proactive, providing effective interventions that have safeguarded the children. The staff respond to internet safety concerns with rigour. They regularly speak to children and ensure that they are educated about the potential dangers. The social workers said that the staff manage children's use of the internet well.

The manager has revised the children's risk assessments to ensure that they reduce risk more effectively. The staff approach risk reduction holistically. They educate, inform and therapeutically support the children. Children benefit from this approach to risks both emotionally and physically. Risk assessments are widely understood by the staff, and they are regularly reviewed and reflect the children's known and emerging risks.

The children do not go missing from the home and benefit from a sense of security.

The staff rarely use restraint. The occasional use of restraint is reasonable and proportionate. It is used as a last resort and when necessary to safeguard the children or the staff from harm.

The staff continue to restrict the children's use of electronic devices as a sanction for poor behaviour. The manager has provided the staff with guidance on alternative strategies and monitors the sanctions regularly. Restricting the children's electronic device use is not helping the children to change their behaviours. This means that opportunities to educate children about their poor behaviours are missed.

Consequently, this limits the children's capacity to make positive behavioural changes.

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

Since the last inspection, a new manager and responsible individual have been appointed. The manager and the responsible individual have positively influenced the management of the home and improved the outcomes for children. The managerial oversight has improved. The assessment of risk is undertaken with greater rigour and insight regarding the strengths and limitations of the home, which are more clearly understood now.

The manager has a clear vision for the home, high standards for the children and a desire to empower the staff to share her vision. The manager understands the weakness of the staff team and how this has the potential to influence the outcomes for children. In a short period of time she has identified and set about addressing the areas that require improvement.

The staff have welcomed the new manager and said she is 'a breath of fresh air', and that she has already made a number of positive changes.

New staff undertake a comprehensive induction. The induction encompasses a good selection of exercises that help the staff to reflect on their care practices. This induction improves the children's care.

Overall, the training programmes are good. However, three of the staff have failed to complete the required qualification in the requisite time frame. As the home has several new staff members, this means that only half of the staff team has the relevant qualification. Therefore, the children are not fully benefitting from a staff team that has the required skill set and knowledge base.

The manager understands that multi-agency working ensures that the children receive the appropriate services available to them. The manager and responsible individual tenaciously challenge other professionals if children are being negatively affected by decisions about their care.

The manager has good oversight of the children's plans, ensuring that they reflect children's needs as stated in their local authority care plans. The manager works exceptionally well with agencies and professionals, engaging services for children in line with their needs. This benefits the children and ensures that they receive targeted support from specialists as and when required.

Internal and external monitoring are strong. The manager responds effectively to the recommendations in external monitoring reports and this response drives progress. The manager's review of care identifies actions to maintain or improve the quality of care. The review considers the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. Consequently, the manager ensures that the children continue to receive good and improving levels of care.

## 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>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or</p> <p>in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.</p> <p>The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual—</p> <p>does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or</p> <p>works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b))</p>	31 August 2021

### Recommendation

- The registered manager should ensure that any sanctions should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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:** 2nd Floor Maybrook House, Queensway,  
Halesowen, Worcestershire B63 4AH

**Responsible individual:** Anna Mynhardt

**Registered manager:** Elizabeth Hutchison

## Inspector

Lianne Bradford, Social Care Inspector

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