

SC481015

Registered provider: Unique Care Homes Support Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The privately owned home provides care for up to six children aged between 10 and 18 years who present with social, emotional and mental health needs and/or learning needs.

The registered manager left in June 2021. A new manager has been in post since June 2021 but has not registered with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 26 January 2022

Date of last inspection: 22 June 2021

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection.
At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.

This inspection was brought forward to investigate specific concerns that were reported to Ofsted. Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious child protection allegations were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the allegations were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform the inspectors' judgements.

Two requirements and two recommendations were set at the full inspection. One requirement regarding staff supervision is not met. The recommendations in respect of risk assessments and maintenance and decor of the home are now raised as requirements as they have not been met.

This home is an unhappy one. Children's experiences are poor and staff morale is low. Children's progress has been limited. Three out of the six children living at the home have had notice served on their placements. Although, for one child, discussions had previously been held about the potential for the child to move out, the child was not aware of how soon they would be leaving the home. This child said that they were upset that they had to leave the home so quickly. Children have education placements. However, for some children, their attendance is sporadic.

The manager has been in post since June 2021. Despite this, she is not registered with Ofsted.

Children said that they feel that some children are favoured by the manager and treated differently as a result. Specific examples were given of what some children are allowed and not allowed to do when refusing to attend school. Children said that one child who refuses to hand her phone in to staff is treated more favourably than others. Children said that they feel that their positive behaviours, such as going to school and handing in their phones, are not rewarded and that some children's unwanted behaviour goes unchallenged.

Staff said that they feel unable to implement boundaries with the children as this is not approved of by the manager. Staff and children say that children's behaviours have become more unsettled in recent months, and this has left some children feeling scared at times.

Five out of the six children said that they have felt let down by the manager as they have not been able to build trusted relationships with her. Children do not feel

confident that the manager will act on their wishes and feelings. In addition, children have been made privy to private conversations that should have remained between staff. Staff have failed to model positive relationships or help children to understand mutually respectful relationships.

Five out of six children said they do not like the regular use of agency or unfamiliar staff. One child said, 'I don't like having strangers in my home. They don't know me, so how can they care for me?' Regular use of unfamiliar staff has meant that children are not provided with consistent care from people who know them well.

The home lacks warmth. It requires redecoration and refurbishment. Carpets and some walls are soiled. An inappropriate statement written on a child's door was not wiped away, some children are without wardrobes and a used mattress was discarded in the garden. Although there is a plan to maintain the home to a better standard, the children's current lived experience at the home is not good enough.

Social workers said that the staff team has become 'fractured' and that children are acutely aware of the difficult dynamics in the team. The manager has been unable to lead the staff team to work together to support the children's needs.

Not all staff have received supervision in line with the home's supervision policy. Opportunities have been missed to support staff. This has been at a time when they have had difficulty managing children's behaviours in addition to experiencing discord in the wider staff team. This shortfall was raised at the last inspection.

Staff receive appropriate training. All staff have the required qualification for their roles.

Risk assessments overall are good. However, one child's specific health needs have not been appropriately assessed. Therefore, staff are not provided with guidance to manage this health need safely. Risk assessments also fail to provide guidance for staff in the event that a child does not hand in their mobile phone as agreed in the children's plans. This has meant that one child has continued to use their phone when staff have had concerns that the child may be at risk from others online.

Staff and children said that the responsible individual is available and accessible and a good source of support. Staff and children said that the responsible individual can be relied on to create positive change and act on their wishes and requests.

The management of safeguarding concerns and allegations is good. Concerns are clearly recorded, referred promptly and responded to with rigour. This ensures that lessons learned are implemented and encourages preferred practice.

Staff manage children's missing from home incidents well. Restraints are only used when it is reasonable and proportionate to do so. Complaints are managed in line with the home's policy. Safer recruitment checks are in place to ensure that adults who work at the home are suitable.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/06/2021	Full	Good
16/12/2019	Full	Good
11/12/2018	Full	Good
07/11/2017	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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i))</p> <p>In particular, to replace carpets that are soiled, remove the mattress that is on the lawn and redecorate the home to a homely and well-maintained standard.</p>	28 February 2022
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, the manager should model positive and consistent relationships with the children.</p>	18 February 2022

<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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))</p> <p>In particular, update risk assessments to reflect the safe use of mobile phones and the management of one child’s specific health needs.</p>	<p>18 February 2022</p>
<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> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(e))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that children are provided with support from a consistent staff team that works as a collective to meet the children’s needs.</p>	<p>18 February 2022</p>
<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> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>	<p>28 February 2022</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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that that the manager registers with Ofsted.</p>	
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iii))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that children are provided with honest information and adequate notice that their placements are ending, to enable them to have a positive experience of moving on from the home.</p>	<p>18 February 2022</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff receive supervision at a frequency in line with the organisation's policy.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	<p>18 February 2022</p>

Information about this inspection

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full 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: SC481015

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: Emma Hemmings

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Lianne Bradford, Social Care Inspector
Amy Miles, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022