

# 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.

### Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2023

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<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:** 8 June 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/06/2021	Full	Good
29/01/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good
30/10/2018	Full	Good
18/07/2017	Full	Good

## **Inspection judgements**

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

There are three children living at the home. The children feel safe and supported. They know how to ask staff for support when needed. The children feel that staff are approachable and understand what they need. They feel that what they say is valued and acted on.

Children are supported to maintain relationships with their families and friends. Staff take children to meet with their families and friends, and they supervise family time if required. This means that children are able to maintain positive lifelong relationships and networks as part of their future care plans. This consistency in relationships gives children certainty and stability.

Children's health needs are met, and children are registered with primary health services. They are educated about the risks of smoking and with regard to relationships and sexual health. They are encouraged to take age-appropriate responsibility for their decisions and make choices in meeting their own health needs.

Children who leave the home are supported to move on in a positive way. One child who moved out at short notice was provided with a detailed plan to support their move. The child remained at the home, with the full support of staff, past the move date, until a suitable long-term alternative was found. This level of support offered the child consistency during a time of instability and uncertainty.

The staff devise individualised care plans for new children. They understand children's individual needs and how to keep them safe. However, the impact risk assessments at the point of referral do not contain detailed analysis of risks and the impact on individual children. This means that the staff may not be aware of the potential dynamics between children.

None of the children are in mainstream education. This is for a variety of reasons, including recently moving into the home, being excluded from school and needing an alternative education provision. The children are all receiving online tuition. However, there are not enough activities to supplement children's education. This fails to ensure that children participate in a wide range of social and cultural experiences. Therefore, the progress of these children is difficult to measure.

The home is large, with communal areas for children to get together and interact. There are some areas of the home that require redecoration and repairs to doors and a window. The children's bedrooms are well furnished and decorated, and they are encouraged to personalise these to suit their own tastes.

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

Children have up-to-date risk assessments which are dynamic. These identify existing risks and new and emerging risks. They provide clear steps for staff to take to ensure that children are protected and safe. This means that staff understand children's risks and are able to take effective action to protect children.

Children rarely go missing from the home, but when they do, appropriate action is taken. Missing-from-home episodes are routinely reported to the local authority and the police. Staff follow the missing-from-care protocols and take steps to ensure children are found and returned as soon as possible.

Staff infrequently use restraint. When it is used, it is appropriate and proportionate. Children are offered the opportunity to discuss these incidents, and this helps staff to check on the children's well-being. This provides opportunities for staff and children to explore different approaches, to prevent the need for further restraints.

Risks such as fire-setting, smoking, vaping and sexual health have been addressed in targeted work. One child has a bespoke sexual-health programme devised by the organisation's behavioural expert. The local fire service has spoken to the children following incidents of fire-setting. There are areas of the home that have extra fire prevention measures. This focused work allows children to understand how their own behaviour influences the safety of others.

The location risk assessment is detailed and has been written in collaboration with the police. Police share information with the manager about local crimes or persons of concern. This increases staff awareness of potential dangers in the local area and includes risks that relate to the children. This information allows the manager to make informed choices when deciding which children are able to live at the home.

The staff have reduced the use of consequences in the last year. The manager has made an exerted effort to encourage staff to use restorative practices. Restorative work improves the experiences of children and encourages them to reflect and reconsider their choices. However, when staff use consequences, these are not always recorded in line with the regulations.

Children's names are not always recorded in fire-drill records, so it is not clear which children have been involved in drills. This does not ensure that staff know that children know what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency evacuation.

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

The manager knows the children well. She is ambitious and has aspirations for the children and the staff. She is in the process of changing the culture of the home by introducing a therapeutic way of working.

The manager has forged good working relationships with professionals and partner agencies. There is evidence of challenge and strong advocacy in relation to children who are not in mainstream education. Social workers recognise this positive

challenge and the good working relationships and communication that the manager has with them.

The manager and the responsible individual have carried out a learning review following the need to move a child. This review has led to an improvement plan being put in place. This shows that the manager and the responsible individual fully understand what action needs to be taken to avoid similar circumstances.

The manager reports safeguarding concerns to local authorities, Ofsted and the local authority designated officer when required. Incidents are well recorded and management overview is provided. Follow-up actions, such as discussions in staff supervisions, routinely take place. This adds to a culture of learning and development and improvements in staff practice.

Children's complaints are not always adequately recorded or followed up. It is not always clear if agreed actions have been completed or if the child is informed of the actions. This means that staff may not always consider children's views.

There are not enough staff who have specialist training in sexual-health education and working with children who exhibit sexually harmful behaviours. The children's risk assessments identify this as a significant risk. This does not ensure that staff can respond appropriately and consistently to these risks.

## 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 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>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the fire-evacuation records and consequence records meet regulatory requirements and that the outcomes of children's complaints are clearly evidenced.</p>	24 February 2023

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a well maintained and homely environment that meets the needs of the children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff receive training in harmful sexualised behaviours. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)
- The registered person should ensure children are supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

## **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:** Dean Mayes

**Registered manager:** Elizabeth Hutchison

## Inspectors

Tom McGhee, Social Care Inspector (Lead)  
Lianne Bradford, Social Care Inspector



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