

1027158

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 February 2018.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be 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: 12 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/10/2021	Full	Good
19/11/2019	Full	Good
10/01/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/09/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Five children live at the home. Since the last inspection, four children have successfully moved on from the home and three have moved into supported accommodation and are progressing well. One child moved to a foster family.

Children benefit from long-term care, usually lasting more than a year and often exceeding two years. Staff are invested in the children and work in their best interests. This is unanimously acknowledged by social workers.

Three children have moved into the home, and this has altered the group dynamics. The manager has made suitable decisions about the mix of children moving to the home alongside the needs of those children already living there. However, in the last six months, there has been some conflict in the group. The manager has taken the necessary steps to address this conflict, making appropriate consideration of the needs of the group.

All of the children, except for one, have a formal education placement. There have been challenges beyond the manager's control that have delayed a school being identified for this child. The virtual school education officer said that the staff have offered their unrelenting support, advice and guidance to promote the child's educational engagement. Staff have collaborated with an education provider to improve their understanding of how to support children's reading and literacy skills. Staff support the children to read at settling time. This encourages informal learning while increasing children's literacy.

Staff encourage children to carry out chores. These increase their sense of community while teaching children important independence skills.

Children say they 'love' living at the home. They feel supported by staff and appropriately occupied and have a sense of belonging.

One parent said, 'I cannot say enough positive things about the home. The manager is like a substitute mother. The staff enable us to continue to be the [child's] parents, which without them [the staff] we possibly could not be.'

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

On three occasions, leaders and managers have delayed notifying the local area designated officer in regard to allegations made against adults. Although there has been no negative impact on children, leaders and managers have breached the organisation's and the local authority's policy on the referral of allegations.

They have failed to inform Ofsted without delay of an allegation against staff. This impedes Ofsted's capacity to have suitable oversight of safeguarding concerns in the home.

Staff have supported one child exceptionally well regarding his potential involvement in county lines. When staff became aware of the concerns, they took the child away for a short break to give him space from potentially negative influences. Staff carried out targeted work with the child to increase their understanding of the dangers of gang affiliation. This increased the safety of the child and positively encouraged him to make safer choices. As a result, the child made safer choices and does not currently have an interest in gang affiliation.

Staff hold regular discussions with children about how to keep themselves safe. Staff use these discussions to test children's understanding and to increase their safety in an informal way.

One missing-from-care episode has occurred since the last inspection. This shows that children have a sense of belonging and feel safe at the home. Staff are vigilant when children are missing to prompt their safe return. Staff educate children on the potential dangers of going missing from care.

Restraint is reasonable, proportionate and only used when necessary. Staff and children involved in restraints receive meaningful debriefs to discuss the incident. Leaders and managers encourage children to have a reflective space to consider their actions after restraints. Additionally, staff provide children with targeted discussions that are used as learning activities to inform children's understanding.

Risk assessments are up to date, reflective of the children's needs and provide clear guidance for staff to reduce levels of risk.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and well respected by the staff, social workers and families. She is exceptionally child-focused. Children enjoy the company of the manager and often seek her out to spend time with her.

Social workers said that the manager provides effective and regular updates. This keeps social workers fully informed about their children's progress.

The manager has a good understanding of the children's needs, the strengths of the home and the areas that require development. She responds to complaints comprehensively and promptly.

The manager provides staff with regular and meaningful supervision. Practice issues are discussed in these supervision sessions. The manager provides a good blend of direction and support in these sessions to improve staff practice.

Overall, the management team ensures that plans for children are up to date and reflective of their needs. However, one child's placement plan contains out-of-date information. Inaccurate records fail to provide staff with the correct information and guidance they require to meet children's needs.

One requirement and one recommendation made at the last inspection have been met. One requirement relating to the management of allegations has been raised again at this inspection.

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 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>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vii))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all allegations against staff are managed in line with the home’s safeguarding policies.</p>	3 March 2023
<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 children’s records are up to date and reflect children’s needs.</p>	3 March 2023
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))</p>	3 March 2023

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: 1027158

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: Sarah Mansi

Inspector

Lianne Bradford, Social Care Inspector

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