

# SC447645

Registered provider: Unity Residential Care Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is part of a private children's care organisation and is registered to accommodate three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 10 to 11 January 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **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:** 22 March 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Declined in effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:**

None

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Children make good progress from their starting points.
- Children are safe and happy living in this home.
- Effective partnership working with professionals, families and friends promotes

children's self-esteem and confidence.

- Staff have a good knowledge of the needs of children and have high aspirations for them.
- Children are encouraged to have their friends visit them at home.
- Children's views are actively sought.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement      |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 22/03/2017      | Interim         | Declined in effectiveness |
| 06/12/2016      | Full            | Good                      |
| 05/02/2016      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness    |
| 18/08/2015      | Full            | Good                      |

## Inspection judgements

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

Children make good progress living in this home. They enjoy good, humorous and warm parenting from staff. Children get on well together and look out for each other. Children are afforded personalised care. Staff are imaginative when engaging with children. For example, a 'worry monster' was introduced for a child who found it difficult to communicate their feelings. The child is now able to express their emotions to staff directly and has stated, 'I do not have any worries anymore.' Managers and staff are very proud of the children that they care for, and celebrate the achievements children make, no matter how small.

New children are welcomed into the home and staff provide as much information as possible to help them settle in. The children's guide is extremely child-focused and individualised to each child.

Children benefit from a homely environment. Children and staff all sit down together at mealtimes. Children are provided with healthy diets and contribute to their meal choices. Staff encourage children to try different foods to expand their tastes. All children attend medical appointments regularly and staff listen to and act on children's fears. For example, a child was extremely anxious about attending the dentist. Key-work sessions were undertaken with the child and a suitable dentist was identified. The child now attends the dentist without apprehension. Staff advocate for children to receive the support that they need both emotionally and physically. Consequently, children are making great strides in all areas of their health.

Children are making good progress in education. An education professional stated, 'Staff managed [child's] return to school and made sure that they read with [child] every night. [Child] made nine months' progress in their reading age in the first three months they were back at school.' Staff are aspirational for children; they encourage and arrange educational provision for the older children that will interest them and help them with their future career goals. As a result, children prosper. Their academic abilities increase, as do their social skills.

Children enjoy spending time with staff, for example playing football and having their nails done. One child said that their key worker was 'the best'. Children engage in meaningful discussions with their key worker that help them to understand matters that are pertinent to them. For example, the Green Cross Code, manners, child sexual exploitation and bullying. Children learn all the time, but staff make sure that this is achieved in a subtle, thoughtful manner that allows children to be children and enjoy the fun side of life.

Children enjoy spending time with their family and friends. Children are positively encouraged to have their friends visit, for dinner, a playdate or both. This was observed during the inspection. Children are relaxed and happy living in the home. One stated, 'I feel listened to and there is mutual respect.'

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

Children are safe. Children's risk assessments and vulnerabilities are well known by staff and detailed in their individual plans and risk assessments. Staff are proactive in identifying risks to children and review these risks regularly.

Children do go missing from this home and are at risk of child sexual exploitation. However, staff manage these risks well. Staff always follow children, should they leave, and contact their friends to establish where they are. Staff are fully aware of the individual triggers for children, and can identify when a child becomes anxious and running away may be more likely. As a result, the number of incidents when children run away has significantly reduced.

There have been some incidents of bullying since the last inspection. This was addressed swiftly and appropriate action was taken by staff. There are currently no issues of bullying in the home. In fact, children have strong, caring relationships with each other. Staff manage children's behaviour well. Staff have consistent boundaries which provide children with a sense of safety and security. Staff use incentives and positive relationships (rather than sanctions) to promote positive behaviour. Physical interventions are only used as a last resort. The frequency of these has reduced as children learn to feel safe and trust staff.

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

The home is managed by a qualified and competent manager who has recently been registered by Ofsted. She is supported by a passionate deputy manager and staff. A small number of the core staff are suitably qualified in residential childcare, and good arrangements are in place to ensure that unqualified staff can gain the relevant childcare qualification within the appropriate timescales. There is a strong emphasis on delivering good child-focused care. Managers continually strive to provide the best experiences and outcomes for children.

The manager undertakes a range of monitoring checks to ensure that the quality of the care provided at the home is of a high standard. These processes are robust and ensure that children's behaviour and associated risks are well evaluated. The manager has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. As a result, she is able to demonstrate the impact that living at the home has on children, and continually drive forward improvements.

Staff receive good-quality supervision and appraisals that provide them with the support and training required to deliver good care to children. The statement of purpose details the ethos of the home and is readily available to professionals and parents. The aims of the statement of purpose are met. The home has a staff rota that now provides consistency to children. Staff are trained to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to meet the individual needs of children. The development of the home is informed by children's views, sought through informal discussions and children's meetings. This shows the manager's commitment to ensuring that the voice of children is central to all

aspects of the home.

Managers and staff have good working relationships with family members, professionals and children's friends. All are complimentary about the home, communication and the commitment of staff. The manager will actively challenge other professionals if necessary, to ensure that the children receive the services necessary to help them to progress.

## **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:** SC447645

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Unity Residential Care Services Ltd

**Registered provider address:** 98 Lancaster Road, Newcastle Under Lyme ST5 1DS

**Responsible individual:** Hilary Jones

**Registered manager:** Emma Shea

## Inspector

Sandra King, social care inspector

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